

Public Administration

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Independent Television in Britain

By SIR ROBERT FRASER

The Federal Republic of Germany is now debating the question of introducing a second television service to compete with the present Länder (or State) television services. The Director General of the Independent Television Authority was invited to speak to German audiences about British experience, and gave the following address in Bonn and Bad Boll on 10th and 12th March.

INTRODUCTION

YOU have done me the honour of asking me to give you my own personal reflections on the introduction of independent television in Britain—how it works, what it is like in itself, and what influence it has exercised on British television as a whole. You are yourselves engaged in a hard debate about the future arrangements for television in your own country: a debate in which many of the alignments and arguments are remarkably similar to those in our own debate five years ago: the debate which ended for us in the passage of the Television Act of 1954. This debate in Germany is your debate, which you will settle in your way. And I hold it as a great courtesy that you have decided to take into some account, in your own deliberations, our own experience since we began our transmissions two and a half years ago.

I shall divide into four parts what I have come to say to you.

I shall speak firstly of the structure of British independent television, of the policy, duties and powers of the Independent Television Authority, of the work and responsibilities of the programme companies, and of the relationship of the whole system to advertising. I shall here be concerned to make the point that British independent television is neither State television nor private enterprise television, but a mixed system combining elements of both, a system, at present without exact parallel in any other country, in which private initiative and responsibility work inside a frame of public control.

Secondly, I will speak of the rules and principles laid down by the Television Act for the control of programmes. I shall here be concerned to make the point that this essential part of the Act consists inevitably of general principles of which the practical application must be worked out in a system of partnership, and in a spirit of friendship, between the Authority and its programme companies.

Thirdly, I will speak of the actual content and the quality of the programmes of independent television. And I shall here be concerned to make the point that, in their third year, these programmes, so far from consisting, as was predicted by some, of trivial entertainment, are satisfactory and balanced programmes, in no way inferior to those of the State service.

Fourthly and last, I will attempt some analysis of the effects of the introduction of competitive independent television on the general quality of British television as a whole. And I will here be declaring my conviction not merely that these effects have been wholly good, but that the beneficial influences have been far greater than even the most devoted friends of

independent television ever dreamed possible. And this part of my argument I know I must prove to you by factual reference, by giving you an account of what has actually happened.

THE STRUCTURE OF INDEPENDENT TELEVISION

Firstly, then, the structure of independent television.

Like the B.B.C., the Authority is a public corporation. Its ten Members, also like the Governors of the B.B.C., are appointed by the Government for a fixed term of years. The appointments are all part-time, but the Chairman makes the Authority's business his main interest. The Authority has a permanent staff, of whom the Director General is the head. The Act calls upon the Authority, not the programme companies, to provide Britain with a television service that shall be a competitive alternative to the B.B.C. service. The Authority is thus the architect, the planning board, and the day-to-day governing body of the system. The institutions and the character of the system flow from its decisions. And, apart from all that, it has a great executive engineering responsibility, for it is the builder of the transmitting stations, which it designs, owns, and operates.

In what respect, then, you may well ask, does this system of independent television differ from that of the State service? In this vital and characteristic respect.

The Act instructs the Authority, except in certain very special circumstances which have never arisen and are never likely to arise, not to produce programmes itself, but to choose and appoint independent companies to supply the programmes for its transmissions. The Authority enters into contracts with these programme companies for the supply of programmes, and these contracts lay down in general terms the kind of programmes that are to be supplied.

Thus there have already come into existence since 1955 eight programme companies, four large "parent" companies on whose production of programmes the system centrally depends, and four regional companies, two already operating and two due to begin later this year, taking their main supply of programmes from the parent or network companies, but adding programmes of their own of special interest for the localities, such as Scotland and Wales, in which they operate.

The names of these companies are already household words in Britain, as famous as those of our national newspapers. They are, in a true sense, the trusted partners of the Authority, working in amity with it in the fulfilment of its plans and its policies, and carrying on their own shoulders the burden of creating the programmes which the viewer will see and by which he will judge the system. By their work, we stand or fall.

It is, as I said, this existence of the programme companies, which are, of course, private enterprise firms, that constitutes the fundamental difference between the B.B.C.'s State service and independent television. But there is also a radical difference between this system and private enterprise television in the United States and Australia. In the British system no programmes are supplied, as in America and Australia they are nearly all supplied, by a succession of advertisers. The general programme policy is laid down by

the Authority, and the programmes themselves are devised and produced and presented by the programme companies, exactly as the editor of a newspaper or magazine selects and produces the material that fills his editorial columns. I do not think it possible to exaggerate the importance of this distinction between control by an editor and control by advertisers, or the degree to which it has contributed to the standing and social responsibility of British independent television.

The system also makes it very simple to explain the financial structure of independent television. The companies obtain their income from the sale of advertising time, as a newspaper obtains perhaps half its income from the sale of advertising space. From this income the companies meet their own production expenses; and from it also, as part of their contracts, they pay the Authority a monthly rental which enables it to meet the costs of transmission and its capital investment programme.

Before I leave this part of my subject, I must say a little about two great principles to which the Authority has held in the construction of this system. The first is the principle of competition. We have made a system that is not merely competitive with the State service, but competitive within itself. We have not one national programme company, or a cartel of a few companies, but already eight independent companies competing to sell programmes one to the other, competing for advertising income, and, not least powerful, competing for prestige and standing. The second is the principle of regionalism. We have appointed, wherever possible, local companies, under local control, producing a proportion of local programmes, identifying themselves hour by hour with the life of the regions in which they operate. This is, of course, in sharp distinction from the inevitable features of a centrally controlled unitary State service.

THE CONTROL OF PROGRAMME STANDARDS

I pass now to the requirements of the Act in the matter of the control of the standards of the programmes to be transmitted. Of these, there are five of major importance. They are as follow:

- (a) the programmes shall be "balanced"—that is to say, they must not consist purely of entertainment, but should deal with the whole of life;
- (b) they must be impartial—that is to say, in all matters of controversy, they must represent all points of view fairly;
- (c) they must contain proper proportions of British material—that is to say, they must not be overrun with material imported from foreign countries, but must duly encourage our own producers, writers, and performers;
- (d) they must not offend public taste, or contain offensive references to living people—that is to say, they must be good-mannered programmes;
- (e) the advertisements must contain no political or religious propaganda or point of view on any controversial question of public policy, but must be confined to the honest selling of goods.

A moment's thought must make it clear that these observances cannot be secured except by close and amiable co-operation between the Authority

and its great programme companies. The whole production of programmes, from their first creative thought to their final presentation, must be instinct with regard for them if independent television is to work freely and flourish fairly. The only alternative would be the Authority as schoolmaster, policeman, and general disciplinarian, and the companies as lifeless servants of an agency which they obeyed and did not respect. That would be a prescription for television without self-respect, without charm, and without a soul. If I emphasise this so strongly, it is only because I see very clearly that the spirit in which the Act is operated is all important. Worked in a bad spirit, without sympathy and understanding between the Authority and the companies, our Act would prove to contain no magic institutional formula to guarantee success. In fact, the system would fail.

THE PROGRAMMES THEMSELVES

I turn now to the analysis of independent television programmes as they exist today, as, after almost exactly 2½ years of operations, they are seen in nearly 5½ million homes.

We are now transmitting a little more than sixty hours of programmes a week. Of these, some 17 hours are devoted to news, politics and public affairs, religion, science, the arts, and formal education for schools. This is about the same quantity of serious programmes as are to be found in the State service. There is, however, a marked difference in the internal composition of the serious programmes in independent television and the State service, independent television paying more attention to politics and public affairs and religion, and the B.B.C. more attention to the arts, to science, and to nature, travel, and other general interests.

We have made a special effort to introduce and develop programmes of information and discussion about politics in the broadest sense of the word, and I would venture to claim that these programmes have become a characteristic feature of British independent television and one of the most remarkable features of television anywhere in the world.

There is no accident about this. Being proud of the way in which the democratic process has gradually evolved in Britain during the last three hundred years, we would have held it a disgrace if we had not sought ways by which television could serve democracy in our country.

These programmes of democracy, as I might perhaps call them, begin with the news bulletins, of which there are each day two in our programmes, usually of fifteen minutes each. In these news bulletins, which have been widely hailed as striking a new note in British television, we have tried to present the news of the day, and especially the political and international news, in a fresh and arresting way, in a way which both brings home the meaning of the news and encourages our people to reflect upon its significance, in a way that has democratic value. Ministers and Members of Parliament are frequently invited to appear in the news bulletins. In the period from January of last year until November, there were 53 interviews with Ministers in our news bulletins, and in addition there were 50 interviews with Members of Parliament.

These news bulletins are supported by seven regular weekly programmes which deal in some cases always, in others much more often than not, with

public affairs—*Free Speech*, the famous Sunday afternoon programme in which well-known commentators discuss the week's political events; *Tell the People*, a Sunday evening programme in which the Prime Minister, Mr. Gaitskell, Mr. Butler, and the Russian Ambassador have all been interviewed in recent weeks; *This Week*, a weekly news magazine on current affairs; *Youth Wants to Know*, in which outstanding public men and women are questioned by an audience of young people; *Under Fire*, a programme in which, on the most controversial subject of the week, two prominent people in London are questioned by an audience in Manchester 200 miles away; *Roving Report*, which usually takes as its subject some international event or problem; and *What the Papers Say*, a weekly analysis of the treatment of news and opinion in the newspapers.

We also carry each year the seven official broadcasts by party leaders; and we have just broken new ground by covering for the first time in British television a by-election campaign.

These programmes have very large audiences. In England the public political meeting is not now well attended, and it is estimated that the total weekly audience at the public meetings of all parties is only about one-thirtieth of one per cent. of the total audience for these seven programmes, together with the two weekly political programmes in the B.B.C. service. To achieve audiences as large as they last enjoyed on television, the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition would each have had to address public meetings of 200 people every night for 35 years, about the full working life of a successful politician.

In all these programmes complete impartiality is the rule. They take the form either of balanced discussions in which all points of view are represented or of a balanced series of programmes in which the various points of view are presented in turn, one in one programme, the other in the next. One of the great fears expressed in our debates in 1953 and 1954 was that independent television would not succeed in avoiding bias in dealing with political affairs. There would have been one safe way of avoiding bias—namely, by avoiding political programmes, and keeping only to the safe road of entertainment. But this, as I have already made plain, is not the road we chose. It will perhaps be a sufficient comment if I say that in presenting our political programmes we have had the willing co-operation of all the democratic parties, and that I do not recall, in the whole 2½ years, one single complaint of unfairness from any one of them.

I pass now to our religious programmes. There are two of these each Sunday. Every Sunday morning we televise a religious service from a church or chapel, holding the balance even between the various denominations. Every Sunday evening there is a half-hour discussion about the meaning of religion, the value of faith and the application of both to practical life. These evening programmes usually have an audience of nearly 1½ million people. In addition to these programmes, our daily transmissions close with an epilogue of prayer or Christian message. In devising all these programmes, we are guided by a panel of religious advisers which consists of Canon Heaton, the Canon of Salisbury Cathedral, Dr. John Marsh, the Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford, Monsignor Tomlinson, Chaplain to the Catholic students of the University of London, Dr. Ernest Jarvis,

an ex-Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, and the Rev. D. R. Thomas, of the Presbyterian Church of Wales.

I turn now to our programmes for schools. These have now been running for a year, and are an established part of independent television. They are broadcast each term on each weekday afternoon, and for the convenience of teachers each is repeated after a break of 15 minutes. The subjects change each term. For the present term the subjects are the interpretation of Shakespeare's play, *Macbeth*, with a famous Shakespearean actor in the main part, the value and pleasure of reading books, agriculture, and new forms of industrial power.

These programmes were the first regular nation-wide television schools programmes in the English-speaking world.

In science, the arts, and learning, there are at present four outstanding weekly programmes—a series on the growth of the human mind, a series of lectures on European history, a programme dealing with the serious theatre, and on Sunday afternoons in the North and Midlands a programme dealing with books.

Of the remainder of our programmes—our light entertainment and variety, our competitions, our sports programmes, our programmes for children, our plays, serials, and films—I will say little, for its character will be well known wherever television programmes are seen. You may, however, be interested to know what proportion of our programmes come from the United States. The answer is that such programmes account for a little under 14 per cent. of the total running time of our transmissions, at present about the same as in the B.B.C. services.

THE INFLUENCE OF INDEPENDENT TELEVISION

I come now to the last part of my subject—the influence of the introduction of independent television on British television as a whole. I said that I believed this to be entirely beneficial. Indeed, when I consider the changes that have taken place in British television since 1954, I see them to be so revolutionary that I fear you are going hardly to be able to believe your ears as I relate the bare and simple facts to you. For it is really a new television world with which we are confronted.

Now this exercise will require that I make comparisons with television as it was in 1955—and I fear, however hard I try, that this means comparison with what was then being made available by the older and pioneering B.B.C. State service. Let me therefore say at the outset, and as clearly and firmly as possible, that, together with everyone else in Britain, I respect the policy and admire the performance of the Corporation, and I would feel uncomfortable if it were thought that I was disparaging either. I am not, in truth, meaning to compare the B.B.C. and I.T.A. services, but the whole of British television as it was in 1955 and as it is now.

By certain simple tests, the British viewer seems in no doubt that the position is better. He has, first of all and most valued, a choice of programmes instead of having to make the best of only one provided by a monopoly largely outside his influence and control. He can choose the programmes he likes from 120 hours of programmes a week instead of only 35, which was the output of British television in its twelfth year. In the 5½ million homes

now able to choose their programmes, the new service is preferred to the old for 65-75 per cent. of all viewing time.

But that, some may say, is a purely quantitative test. I would not agree, for that viewers should have a choice seems to me part of the quality of a free society. But I will pass to some purely qualitative tests.

I will begin by taking the very striking case of religion.

In any typical period of ten weeks in 1955, before there were two services, the viewer looking for programmes of religion would have found four, one church service and three discussion programmes. In a similar ten-week period now, he would find thirty-two, twelve church or chapel services, and twenty discussion programmes. Of these twelve church services he would find ten in our transmissions, and two in those of the B.B.C. Of the twenty discussion programmes he would find ten in each service. In case it may be thought that in this extension we were merely following the B.B.C., I think I may fairly add that regular weekly religious services and also regular weekly discussion programmes on religion were first introduced in independent television. Indeed, it is still only in independent television that there are to be found weekly church services.

Apart from these major programmes of religion, there used to be short programmes of prayer of a few minutes once a week, usually on Sundays. On six days out of seven, there was no opportunity for the viewer to watch, and join in, even a short act of worship. Independent television programmes now conclude each day with a short religious epilogue, not to be found in the other service. On the other side, the B.B.C. has a short religious programme for children each Sunday which we do not at present match, though we are now planning the introduction of a 45-minute programme of a religious kind for young people each Sunday.

Similar developments have taken place in the field of public affairs programmes. In 1955, television was carrying two programmes a week which dealt in the main with politics and current affairs. There are now nine such programmes, some of them dealing entirely with political issues, others taking public affairs as a main subject.

I said earlier that these nine programmes on current affairs seemed to me to have become a main feature of British political life. It could be argued that for the great mass of the electorate they form its main contact with the day-to-day substance of political discussion and argument. Certainly these "public meetings of the air" vastly exceed in importance the traditional public meetings organised by political parties. It is doubtful whether 10,000 a week attend such meetings. The total gross audience for these seven weekly television programmes is of the order of 35 million people—which happens, by chance, to be the total size of the British electorate.

One must also notice a singular feature of all these programmes. In public meetings, and much more often than not in newspapers, the voter hears only one side of the question. Blocks of isolated opinion tend to form, and grind and crash together, instead of becoming sensitively and delicately responsive to the full ebb and flow of thoughtful argument.

In television, for the first time in modern democratic practice, not just the governing élite, but the broad electorate as a whole, is at least hearing

both sides of the question, and becoming familiar with the character and the case of their political opponents.

It is difficult not to believe that in this way television is reducing the passion and the prejudice of the democratic party conflict and leading us perhaps a little closer to the ideal of a fair-minded and temperate democracy.

This tradition of television was honourably begun by the B.B.C. Until the coming of independent television, however, the scale of the operation, with two programmes and one series of news bulletins a week, was limited. Now, with nine programmes and two series of news bulletins, the process has become one of wide and massive force.

Or shall we speak of programmes for schools? In 1955, though the B.B.C. service for schools in sound programmes was already famous, television in Britain was providing nothing for schools whatever, despite the remarkable local developments in educational television in America. Before our second birthday, we had introduced regular afternoon programmes for schools. These were, as I said, the first national television service for schools in the English-speaking world.

Today, in each school term, there are three programmes every day, one in the B.B.C. service, and two, the second being a later repeat of the first, in our transmissions.

If we take together all serious television programmes, other than schools programmes, available for viewers, there were about twelve in 1955. There are now about thirty, fifteen in each programme.

I hope I may have done a little to show you, in terms of English experience, how little there was in the fears, how little there was in the predictions, that the introduction of independent television would lead to a lowering of standards. We are producing programmes of which we are proud. As for the B.B.C., it rightly and robustly denies that it has allowed any degradation of its own standards.

With your leave, I will conclude with a word of personal political faith. By no argument of which I can conceive is it possible to reconcile monopoly in broadcasting, any more than in the press, or in books, or on the stage, or in the cinema, with the faith of a free man in freedom. I believe that monopoly in any of these fields, though it may be combined with a deep and true sense of public responsibility, as with our own B.B.C., is yet an enemy of the free spirit of man. I believe that, in the fundamental sense, the great advances in British television secured since 1954, not least, it would seem to me, in the B.B.C. service itself, are the fruits of freedom. And I rejoice that few, if any, in Britain would now ever dream of reimposing the rule of monopoly which came to an end only thirty short months ago.

INDEPENDENT TELEVISION IN BRITAIN

APPENDIX

Serious Programmes in British Television

This memorandum makes the point that the number of serious programmes available for viewers each week :

- (a) in the days of the one-service monopoly was 10-15 ;
- (b) in the present B.B.C. service is about 18-22 ;
- (c) in the present I.T.A. service is about 18-20 ;
- (d) in both services is about 36-42.

2. The following serious programmes, of the duration in minutes given in brackets, appeared in the B.B.C. service in the week ended 24th September, 1955, the last week of the monopoly :

- 1. Concert Hour (60).
- 2. Brains Trust : discussion (30).
- 3. Music at Ten (60).
- 4. Panorama : news magazine (45).
- 5. Priestley at Home : personality study (30).
- 6. Animal, Vegetable, Mineral : culture quiz (30).
- 7. Christian Forum : religious discussion (30).
- 8. Facts and Figures : current statistics (15).
- 9. *Tosca* (25).
- 10. Inventors' Club : amateur inventions (30).
- 11. Prayers (10).

3. The following serious programmes appeared in the B.B.C. services for the week ended 8th March, 1958 :

- 1. Church Service (60).
- 2. Concert Hour (45).
- 3. Brains Trust : discussion (45).
- 4. Sunday Special : religion for children (10).
- 5. Meeting Point : religious discussion (25).
- 6. Monitor : the arts (45).
- 7. Schools Programme : zoology (30).
- 8. Panorama : news magazine (45).
- 9. Orson Welles : talk (15).
- 10. Schools : the Commonwealth (30).
- 11. Black Furrow : preservation of amenities (40).
- 12. Your Life in their Hands : study of hospitals (30).
- 13. Party Political Broadcast (25).
- 14. Who Said That? : derivation of quotations (25).
- 15. A Little Music : concert (15).
- 16. Schools : zoology (30).
- 17. Sky at Night : the stars (15).
- 18. Farming : for farmers (30).
- 19. Schools Programme : how to buy wisely (30).
- 20. Ministerial Broadcast (20).
- 21. Schools Programme : history of education (30).
- 22. Eye to Eye : social documentary (30).
- 23. Press Conference : political discussion (30).

4. The following serious programmes appeared in the I.T.A. London transmissions for the week ended 8th March, 1958 :

1. Church Service (45).
2. Free Speech : political debate (30).
3. Tell the People : interview with famous person, usually political (15).
4. About Religion : religious discussion (25).
5. Schools Programme (given twice) : agriculture (60).
6. The Last Word : the meaning of words (20).
7. Celebrity Concert : international artists (60).
8. New Horizon : scientific lecture (30).
9. Schools Programme (given twice) : atomic power (60).
10. Party Political Broadcast (25).
11. On Stage : theatrical criticism and news (30).
12. Schools Programme (given twice) : *Macbeth* (60).
13. Youth Wants to Know : youth discussion (20).
14. Keeping In Step : social documentary (15).
15. Schools Programme (given twice) : agriculture (60).
16. Roving Report : oversea documentary (20).
17. This Week : news magazine (30).
18. Schools Programme (given twice) : pleasures of reading (60).
19. Conflict : controversial discussion (15).

5. The tables above exclude news bulletins, of which there are two a day in each service, with a total duration of about 30 minutes in each service. There is also a half-hour week's news summary in the B.B.C. service. They also exclude religious epilogues, with which all I.T.A. programmes conclude each day, and with which the B.B.C. concludes its Sunday programmes. There are occasional serious items in the B.B.C.'s daily light magazine programme *Tonight*.

6. Programmes vary a little from week to week. In the week ended 8th March, 1958, there were a little more serious programmes than usual in both services. For example, the B.B.C. had its monthly church service in this week, and the I.T.A. had a special concert programme in place of the usual *Under Fire*, a political programme.

Post Office Building Programmes

By R. J. S. BAKER

This study in the practical management of a priority system was awarded the Haldane Essay Prize for 1958. Mr. Baker is Assistant Secretary in charge of the Sites and Buildings Branch at G.P.O. Headquarters.

PRIORITY systems are seldom universally popular. Whether or when they should be used by the central government to control private investment or consumption is a highly controversial subject, but *within* any organisation, public or private, some system of priority to control capital investment, however informal, is inevitable—even if it be only in the rudimentary form of the householder and his wife discussing whether to have a new garage or a new greenhouse, or the small shopkeeper wondering whether to increase his stocks or build a new shop-front. The larger the organisation the more of a system it needs to be. The more the competing forms of investment resemble one another the easier to have a rule-of-thumb system such as would be impossible for the village shopkeeper deciding whether to invest in chalk or cheese. It is essentially a question of establishing common yardsticks which can be applied to all kinds of schemes which make a claim on capital investment. In a private business these yardsticks can no doubt usually be expressed in strictly financial terms. A chain store can presumably assess the actual or potential profitability of its various branches and decide which will best repay extension or modernisation. These financial factors will not necessarily be simple, and there may also be imponderable factors such as advertising prestige and staff morale.

In a public organisation of whatever size, the problem is complicated by many other factors, and although the financial side can never be ignored, it may or may not be paramount. Some forms of public investment may show no direct financial return, even though they are, on other grounds, desirable—such as a public open space—or essential—such as the replacement of a dangerous bridge. Within some Local Authority programmes the competing objects of investment have few common factors measurable in quantitative terms, and where there are comparatively few of them the problems can be resolved by oral debate—public or private—at the policy-making level. But there are today some very large organisations with lists of potential investment projects too numerous for their competing claims to be determined by simple debate. These projects, especially in organisations of a “public utility” character, are usually amenable to some form of financial or statistical comparison but not always to a judgment by these criteria alone. There are public policy considerations, public opinion considerations and considerations of staff morale and also (what is not so often remembered) managerial staff morale—justice must be seen to be done not only from outside but from inside.

In any organisation, large or small, public or private, however, there must always be the temptation not to weigh up the priorities too finely, but simply to do the jobs which seem most practicable and ready to hand—to order

some more of the same type of machine you had before from the firm you know, rather than to get something new developed to serve another purpose which would be more profitable in the end—to build where you have a bit of land or where the immediate public demand is most vociferous—or where your own local officer or representative is most persuasive. It is not suggested that it is always wrong for harassed and overburdened men with limited resources to act in this way—and how many men in control of large organisations in this country since the war have not been in this position?—but it becomes a necessity sooner or later to look further ahead if the organisation is not to stagnate.

We have had to face administrative problems of these kinds in quite acute forms in dealing with Post Office building programmes since the war, especially in the last six years, and it may be that some of our experiences will be of wider interest. To sketch out the field first, Post Office buildings include all accommodation provided for the public telephone, telegraph and postal services (except "scale-payment" sub post offices—that is, those run on an agency basis, usually by shopkeepers). There are telephone exchanges, repeater stations for telephone cables, public post offices, sorting offices, wireless stations, stores depots, workshops, garages, factories, laboratories, and buildings for office staff of all kinds. We have in all well over 10,000 properties (including many which are rented), and new buildings now being started range in cost from a few hundred pounds to over two millions each. Though we have some properties which we have to give up for other uses or which are unsound structurally, in general, when there is a demand for new Post Office buildings it arises from growth in public demand for Post Office services. In particular, to provide service to new telephone subscribers we need more space in telephone exchanges. Sufficiently large and adequately constructed and sited buildings are also a crucial factor in the efficiency of the postal services—as also that of our various wireless services. Trunk telephone cables require fairly closely spaced chains of repeater stations. Stocks of engineers' stores must be adequately housed and located in proper relation to the work in which they are used—and also in relation to the headquarters of the men who do the work and the transport used in doing it—and that again in relation to its workshops—and so on. It is obvious that one has here a great collection of competing, but not easily comparable, demands on a building programme.

The Post Office, unlike some other large organisations, does not provide its own buildings directly. It acts through the agency of the Ministry of Works who provide the architects, quantity surveyors, structural engineers, contracts organisation, and so on. The Post Office, at the outset of each case states its requirements in detail in terms of space, location, and on special points (like floor loadings), and discusses and agrees the plans and authorises and meets the expenditure. It also, through its own staff, installs the engineering equipment, such as exchange apparatus, sorting machinery, and so on. Subject to Treasury limits on investment it decides (in consultation with the Ministry of Works as to what is practicable) the size and composition of its annual total building programmes. Although the Ministry has various professional and specialist departments, its dealings with the Post Office on matters of policy are conducted by its administrative department. Likewise

one branch of the Post Office Headquarters Administration—the Sites and Buildings Branch—is responsible for framing Post Office policy in respect of sites and buildings and for co-ordinating general building requirements and priorities and giving them to the Ministry—although several other Post Office administrative and engineering branches are closely associated in all these matters and in discussions with the Ministry.

Both the Post Office and the Ministry have considerable regional organisations; but only that of the Post Office need be described for the purposes of this essay. The Ministry's regions deal with site purchases and much of the smaller building work, but (except in Scotland and Wales), the design of new buildings and other major building works is controlled and largely executed by the Ministry's Chief Architect's Division in London, and requirements, priorities and policy matters are dealt with through the Ministry's Headquarters Administration.

As the Post Office is an organisation with a staff of over 300,000 it is not surprising that devolution of executive work to regions has been carried to a very considerable length, leaving Headquarters fully occupied with matters of policy and general standards and the co-ordination of executive actions having national rather than regional scope. On buildings matters this has meant that Headquarters lays down detailed standards of space and so on for various purposes and fixes broad programmes but leaves the working out of practically all individual building schemes to regions in conjunction with the Ministry of Works. There are seven regions in England (London Postal, London Telecommunications, Home Counties, Midland, North-Eastern, North-Western, South-Western) and equivalent organisations for Scotland, for Wales and the Border Counties, and for Northern Ireland. Each Regional Director is responsible for all Post Office services (postal, telephone and telegraph) in his region except in Greater London where there are two co-terminous regions—one for postal services and one for telecommunications (in practice, inland telephones and telegraphs). The normal organisation is a Regional Director, Deputy Regional Director (a post of broadly Assistant Secretary level) and five Heads of functional branches—Postal, Telecommunications, Staff and Buildings, Engineering, and Finance. Below the regions the units are divided both functionally and territorially into Telephone Manager's Areas and Head Postmaster's Districts, and these enjoy substantial devolved powers for handling the bulk of local work.

In buildings work, Headquarters has tried to reduce everything that can be so reduced to a rule-of-thumb and then leave nearly all the rest to the Regional Directors. The starting point of any building scheme is the development study—the estimates of traffic and demands for service for a substantial number of years ahead—prepared periodically by Head Postmasters and Telephone Managers, subject to general directions from Headquarters and examination by the Region. Where a building was manifestly too small for current needs or where the development study showed that it shortly would be, it was usual to prepare a "schedule of requirements" and send it to the Ministry of Works as a demand for a new building. There are detailed standards of space to be provided for nearly every main purpose—a position for a clerk at a public counter, a sorting fitting, a unit of telephone apparatus, space for a vehicle in a garage, staff accommodation (for offices,

canteens and cloakrooms), and so on. There are also standard periods of growth for which space should be provided at the outset in new buildings. With the aid of these rules and standards it becomes possible almost automatically to translate a development study into a schedule of requirements, from which an architect can produce his plans.

The trouble ever since the war (and to some extent before) has been the very large number of Post Office buildings of all kinds requiring replacement. With building resources—both of the country as a whole and those available to the Post Office—severely limited, the problem has been first to devise yardsticks for assessing the relative urgency of different needs. On this basis it has then been possible to consider both the order of priority of particular Post Office schemes and also what should be the total size of annual Post Office building programmes.

THE MAIN NEW BUILDING PROGRAMME

This essay deals with the way these matters have been dealt with in the Post Office since the end of 1951. This period is chosen not only as that when the present writer became responsible for Post Office buildings. It was at this time that the Government found it necessary, owing to the severe overload on the building industry, to impose for a time, severe restrictions on public and private building except for defence and housing. Before the special Government restrictions were imposed this overload on the building industry—and indeed other industries—had been playing havoc with the Post Office building programme. Steel shortages above all were putting back starting dates catastrophically. A large back-log of wholly or partly planned schemes was piling up over and above the other and larger back-log of longer standing, consisting of schemes which were being urgently demanded but which could not even be planned.

Our first job in this situation was to get some idea of the volume and the nature of the total pent-up demand for new building in the Post Office. Owing to the need for meeting the huge new demands for telephone services telephone exchanges had enjoyed a virtual priority over all other work. In fact few other buildings of any size had been started or even planned. Regional Directors had naturally not deployed staff on the preparation of development studies and schedules of requirements for buildings that might not be started for years. Sites were—and still are—very difficult to get, and the Ministry of Works could not be asked to expand its resources except to meet planned programmes, authorised, or at least approved in principle, from the policy point of view. Before devising any yardstick or forming any preconceived idea of how the job was to be done, we wrote to all our Regional Directors and asked for lists of the buildings they would like to see started in the next five years. We only gave them the broadest ideas of the basis on which these programmes should be drawn up—or rather three bases—an “ideal” programme, one they would consider “practicable” (that is, considering practical but not financial limitations), and, finally, in between the two, a “desirable” programme. The enquiry and the replies were inevitably rough and ready. When we looked through the replies it was apparent that the “practicable” programmes must fall far short of real

needs and perhaps short of what would have been possible had money been available, and the "ideal" programmes were obviously beyond any demands the Post Office could reasonably make on the nation's economy in any then foreseeable conditions. Moreover the basis of assessment seemed inevitably to differ very widely indeed between different Regions. The "desirable" programmes on the other hand did seem to give some not unreasonable *prima facie* idea of what the fair demand was—the needs of the Post Office given the job it had to do. As we had asked for cost figures of each scheme (which had been roughly but on the whole realistically assessed on the basis of the areas required) we could take a broad measure of the total capital investment involved. The schemes in the "desirable" programmes totalled about £60m. Allowing for rises in prices and under-estimating on the one hand, and on the other the fact that this was a five-year programme of starting and not completing buildings, we could conclude that we ought to be spending some £12m. a year on new buildings for the succeeding five years. In fact, our total capital expenditure on buildings at this time was running at a rate between £3½m. and £4m. a year, including about £½m. for extensions and adaptations.

Nevertheless this very rough five-year assessment proved an invaluable starting-point for getting our sights set at the proper angle. Even if it was not practicable to do more than a fraction of the building we needed—even if, quite properly, other demands had a prior claim on national resources—it was still necessary to establish what our needs were. Time and again since, we have found that we were not beginning to tackle our problems in the way or on the scale required because people assumed—very understandably in view of what they had had to be told in the past—that it was no good ever sitting down to assess the requirements for replacing a totally inadequate building—because the cost seemed high, because the drawing office of the particular architect who was working for them was overloaded, or because there seemed to be insuperable difficulties in getting a site. We had repeatedly to struggle to get separated as two distinct operations firstly the assessment of needs and their priority in relation to one another, and secondly the efforts to get those needs met. It may sound now, as it sounded to some people at the time, a theoretical way of approaching an urgent practical problem. Subsequent experience however has shown that it was the true starting point of practical progress. The figures on page 130 show how our building programmes have in fact expanded.

In recent years, like most building owners—public and private—we have got much less than we wanted when we wanted it. Despite all the efforts at speeding-up, streamlining and economising we have since made, it may take ten years to complete our five-year plan plus the projects of comparable urgency that have occurred since. Nevertheless we have brought about a very pronounced upward turn in the graph of our annual achievements. The conclusion seems inescapable that until a clear objective was set, the total needs made plain and encouragement given to realise them, no one in either the Post Office organisation or the Ministry of Works could be expected to deploy the effort and resources required to meet either the expanded programmes achieved so far, or those planned for the future.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

The broad five-year plans, however, were no sufficient foundation on which to base definite building programmes, drives for site acquisitions, increased staffing proposals nor proposals for increased finance. It was perfectly

NUMBER OF MAIN NEW BUILDINGS STARTED	TOTAL CAPITAL INVESTMENT IN NEW BUILDING WORK (i.e., excluding maintenance but including adaptations, extensions and small jobs)
1952-53 45	£m 4.1
1953-54 73	4.4
1954-55 85	4.5
1955-56 114	5.1
1956-57 174	8.5

obvious in 1952 when we were considering this situation that in the immediate future we could not possibly tackle more than a fraction of the schemes, even those in the first year of the five-year programmes, for some considerable time. We must select—because of Government limitations on our total capital investment, because of the limited number of Ministry of Works architectural staff then working for us, and because to take on too much all at once would overwhelm our own staff and clog up the machine. Of course it was also our objective to see if a reasonable claim to a much larger total capital investment allocation could be substantiated, and following on that to have larger staffs in both the Post Office and the Ministry of Works allocated to all the work connected with our building programme. But we knew all this would take time. We had to choose what few schemes we could tackle in the immediate future with the resources available. A priority system was needed therefore, both to select the schemes for early starting within existing limitations and also to decide to what extent and for what purposes resources should later be expended.

Such a priority system, furthermore, had to be selective in two ways. We had to establish an order of priority between building schemes for totally different purposes—sorting offices, telephone exchanges, and so on—and also as a basis of apportioning resources between Regions. On the latter point, we had hitherto worked on the basis of asking the Ministry of Works to allocate one Senior Architect's section to each of our eight Regions in England and Wales (and roughly the equivalent in Scotland) except that two of the largest Regions had two. The Regional Director could then get as many buildings as the Senior Architect's staff could plan—subject to having sites and to any general limitations of money. Was this allocation fair? What were the "largest" Regions? Population, or postal traffic, or the number of telephones, are not necessarily an index of building needs. One very large scheme would swamp a Regional programme (and so in general very large schemes were not undertaken). One part of the country might have had exceptional population or industrial development before or since the

war producing exceptional growth of postal business and exceptional demand for telephones—and hence a special need for more buildings. In fact, just this situation existed in London, the Home Counties and the Midlands before and since the war. Yet only our Home Counties and London Telecommunications Regions had two Senior Architects each—though, as the priority system later amply confirmed, London Postal and Midland Regions needed them just as much. The system—even with a reallocation of architects—was necessarily rough and ready—a fair improvisation in the immediate post-war years, but now requiring to be supplemented by something more scientific.

For most other parts of the Post Office capital programme, allocations between regions are made on a more or less mathematical basis and such allocations, though not free from problems, work because they are each broadly concerned with one type of commodity—local cables, vehicles of certain types, and so on. But the building programmes necessarily consist of parts unlike one another, two or three sorting offices in large towns overdue for expansion before the war could completely upset the fair balance between Regions, or displace important telephone exchanges from the programme. That was the other half of the problem. We must find a means of sharing our building resources not only between our Regions but between our different services. It was recognised that we could not go on indefinitely deferring the extension or replacement of postal buildings simply because of the extreme urgency of dealing with the telephone waiting list, nor even within the telephone side could we build nothing but exchanges and have the installation staff, stores and vehicles housed in cramped and widely dispersed holes and corners. Where needs were really urgent we must try to meet them—but on the basis of urgency of need alone, not any mathematical formula. To propose giving, say, the postal side a third, a quarter, or any other fixed proportion of the building programme would satisfy nobody. Moreover in any given Region circumstances before the war might have left one side or the other markedly worse housed.

It became clear to us, therefore, that what we were looking for was some common yardstick which could be applied to all types of building schemes and proposals covering any side of Post Office services. It must also be a yardstick which would be uniform in its application throughout the country. We decided that all building schemes should be grouped broadly into three categories of urgency—"A," "B" and "C"—whether they were small public post offices, large trunk telephone exchanges, workshops or anything else. We therefore drew up standard definitions of what constituted "A," "B" and "C" priority for each type of building (reproduced in their later, slightly revised form in the Appendix) and circulated this to Regional Directors with a directive giving them discretion to propose schemes of comparable urgency not exactly falling within the four corners of the definitions. This was all agreed between the three Administrative Departments responsible for Buildings, Postal Services and Inland Telecommunications at Headquarters and with the Engineering Department. All parties concerned in the Post Office, that is, combined to settle the basic rules of the share-out. The whole arrangement for programmes and priorities was then agreed with the Ministry of Works.

Owing to the Government's building restrictions referred to above and to capital investment restrictions, we had no main new buildings started till the final quarter of 1952-53, and of course there was a large pent-up demand for starting in 1953-54. For the period up till the end of 1953-54 therefore the programme of new starts had to be settled quickly on the basis of Regional Directors' written proposals for the new priority categories and with a great deal of bias (which we tried to eliminate in later years) in favour of schemes that were in fact already well advanced in planning with sites available. We had no time for full discussion with Regions. Nor had the Ministry of Works much time to make adjustments in this organisation to meet our new ideas. When we came to the 1954-55 programme, however, we had more time in hand and we decided that with ten different sets of people applying the priority definitions it was inevitable that there would be different interpretations, and there had to be some corrective. The thing was too complex and too important to do in any way but by full oral discussion. A team was formed of representatives of the Postal Services, Inland Telecommunications and Engineering Department, with the Assistant Secretary in charge of the Buildings Branch as chairman. We visited each Regional Headquarters and met representatives of all the regional branches under the chairmanship of the Regional Director or his Deputy. Here, in discussing particular cases or in general discussion beforehand, we hammered out what the definitions actually amounted to in practice. Not only did we correct minor misconceptions—e.g., making clear that all Regions should measure their telephone waiting list *after* engineering expedients to defer the need for new building had been taken account of—we got straight certain basic points—above all that schemes should be graded according to need even though the difficulties of carrying them into effect for some years might appear insuperable—and that a long list of urgent telephone needs did not justify failure to get the postal needs fully assessed also. We learned from the Regional representatives many of the places where the shoe pinched worst—the kind of things that caused the worst trouble in a particular type of building and which could not be put right by expedients—and we tried to produce a synthesis of the different viewpoints we encountered.

Fundamental points which we emphasised were :

- (a) The *facts* on which urgency was decided must be ascertained, assessed and reported by the Regional staffs. The Headquarters staffs had neither the opportunity nor the wish to make such assessments themselves save in quite exceptional cases.
- (b) The Headquarters representatives did not claim to know better than the Regional staffs even in interpreting the degree of urgency from the facts. The point of the Headquarters intervention was to ensure a common basis of assessment—putting it at its lowest if the same people from Headquarters made (or rather agreed) the final assessment in every Region, at least the same sort of mistakes were made everywhere.

Regional co-operation in working out the priority system has been patient and wholehearted all along—even though it meant Headquarters intervention in many cases which would otherwise be entirely devolved to Regions (and which continued to be devolved once the priority and programming had been

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settled). In fact, as we repeated the process each year, less discussion became necessary and once a mutual understanding of the priority categories had been reached everywhere it was only necessary to alter the category of a fraction of the cases in discussion. We also established certain standard sets of facts which required to be reported in the main types of case.

One thing we learned in practice was that apart from the telephone exchanges the written definitions we had laid down were a little too elaborate. In discussion we interpreted the "B" category—which has proved to be the most important one—in such phrases as, "Where the lack of a new building is really preventing or endangering the doing of the essential job properly—or the provision of tolerable working conditions for the staff." "The job," as defined here, might mean delivering mail on time, providing service to customers in a public post office, safeguarding mail or stores of any kind. Normally it is not possible to give a proper service to the public in a public post office half the standard size for the local traffic (or be sure of disposing of all mail promptly and correctly in a sorting office which is intolerably cramped). So we asked for dimensions of the main areas of existing buildings in comparison with the standard space the local traffic would require. But although the rules-of-thumb which the Post Office has for these things are based on decades of experience, we never followed the figures slavishly but insisted that in the last resort we must be guided by the Regional officers' practical local assessment of the effect of the cramped building on the work. Furthermore we could allow "B" priority for a building which was so placed that the Post Office vans created and became involved in intolerable traffic jams, or installations (engineering or postal or occasionally telephone managers' offices) so split up between a variety of different premises as seriously to hamper effective supervision and co-operation. Once everyone concerned had got the "feel" of the "B" category, the others fell into place. In fact an "A" scheme has come to mean one of a very small group—usually only two or three or four in each Region each year—which should enjoy exceptional priority. "C" means roughly any case with substantial deficiencies in present accommodation but not serious enough to justify "B." The "D" category which we had to start with has dropped out and been replaced by a supplementary list of uncategorised schemes intended to give the Ministry of Works some indication of the probable demand for the next and later years. It is some guide—but not a limit—to site acquisitions for future needs.

Having placed our schemes in categories agreed by all concerned in the Post Office, we give the lists to the Ministry of Works. At first the numbers in each category were relatively small and we were optimistic. So we asked the Ministry to devote their resources first to including all the "A" schemes, then all the "B" schemes in every Region (unless there were really insuperable site or other difficulties) before any "C" schemes from any Region were taken, and furthermore to take broadly an equal proportion of schemes in each category from each Region. For 1954-55 most of the "A" and "B" schemes were programmed because the definitions were severely interpreted and a full measure had not been taken of the needs everywhere. In subsequent programmes it has never been possible to include more than a proportion of the "B" cases. (We have in fact helped the lists

to expand by allowing the operative date when the qualifying conditions apply to be taken as that when the new building could be ready and not, as at first, a current date. Thus a telephone exchange can now be "B" if a substantial number of people would in any case be waiting for telephones by the time a new exchange could open. In a postal case the test would be whether the old building would be intolerably congested before the new one could be ready.) The practical problem therefore for the 1955-56 programmes onwards has been to get as many as possible of the "B" cases programmed, and if not all, then a broadly equal proportion from the lists of each Region. When one large Region's list may consist of 50-60 cases it is also most important to try and get the most urgent cases in each category in each Region included. This brings to the fore the question of Regional orders of priority for individual cases. Fixing such an order in full detail is clearly not a job that can or should be done by Headquarters—even in discussion with Regions. The most we have done is to indicate when discussing certain border-line cases that in our view they would be "high 'B'" or "low 'B,'" or remark occasionally that a particular outstanding case might be substantially higher or lower in the list. The job of determining the order is left for the Regional Director to finalise after the visit of the Headquarters team. He or his Deputy normally has a discussion with representatives of the different regional branches and in general interleaves postal, telephone and miscellaneous schemes of broadly comparable urgency. Headquarters would intervene if any Regional list seemed to show a too marked preference for one type of case or another; but there has been no occasion for such intervention.

When the system was first introduced the Post Office simply asked the Ministry of Works to arrange for a broadly equal proportion of each Region's lists of schemes to be included in the final programmes. The Post Office did not ask for the allocation of particular numbers or grades of additional staff to the work of particular Post Office Regions. The result has been that the Ministry allocated an additional Senior Architect's section each to the Post Office Midland and London Postal Regions, and two in Scotland, and made other adjustments as necessary.

When the Ministry's staff gets the Post Office priority lists they have a complex job to do before they can produce a final programme in the form of a list of named schemes to start in a given financial year—preferably with starting dates. They have to check that they have an up-to-date statement of the Post Office requirements, a site in hand or in prospect and time to complete planning and all other pre-contract work. For nearly all these stages of the work we have in recent years introduced or revised a standard drill. As soon as we had got the basis of the priority and programming system fully launched we set about jointly with the Ministry agreeing a standard timetable for the various stages, of which the following are the salient points:

- (a) Despatch of Post Office schedules of requirements to the Ministry.
- (b) "Consultation stage"—discussion of broad basis of planning between Post Office representatives and the architect.
- (c) Provision of sketch plans by the Ministry.

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- (d) Consultation on sketch plans with various Post Office interests concerned.
(There may be various such interests, local, regional and even occasionally Headquarters, different engineering and other specialists, etc.)
- (e) Agreement of sketch plans.
- (f) Authorisation of cost.
- (g) Furnishing of P.O. engineering details at successive stages.
- (h) Tender stage.

There is a standard time allowed for each according to the size of building, and a detailed drill for consultation and liaison, and a rule that once sketch plans are agreed the Post Office can only ask for substantial amendments involving delay on the personal authority of a Regional Director or his Deputy. All this is embodied in a full directive circulated in both Departments. This should enable the Ministry to assess whether there is time to start each case in the priority list in the programme year concerned. They must start however from the question whether they have a schedule of requirements checked with the Post Office as up to date. These Post Office schedules of requirements have for many years been standardised on printed forms, which we have recently revised and made more full and precise. There are separate forms for (a) telephone exchanges, (b) postal buildings, and (c) engineering accommodation (stores, garages and workshops). There is a space for every requirement (numbers or areas) and as the method of meeting each type of requirement is generally also standardised, the architect should know at the very outset all that is required of him—*provided*, of course, the requirements have not changed. A change does not, of course, imply caprice on the part of the Post Office; public demands and population may grow, or there may be developments such as trunk telephone mechanisation which may increase the demands for space for apparatus and reduce that for manual switchboards and telephone operating staff.

All this has been described simply to emphasise that the basic essential—even for seeing that there is a site big enough—is the the schedule of requirements. Behind this in the Post Office organisation is the Development Study based on forecasts of postal or telephone traffic several years ahead. When they got the first priority lists the Ministry had to emphasize that they could not programme schemes where they had not been given up-to-date schedules of requirements. Therefore Post Office Regions had to be instructed to furnish such schedules to the Ministry for at least all "A" and "B" cases by the time the lists were sent in. The magnitude of the task of preparing all the schedules formed a frequent subject of discussion at the visits of the Headquarters team to the Regions. Extra staff were needed in the Post Office as well as in the Ministry. Moreover the whole timetable of furnishing both schedules and priority lists had to be advanced. The Ministry had pointed out that to allow full time for discussion, planning and site acquisitions, both schedules and priority lists ought to reach them three years before the beginning of the programme year (financial year) concerned. This ideal has never yet been attained and the Post Office has drawn attention to the practical difficulties of finalising their demands (in individual cases and for

the programme as a whole) so far in advance, when the whole thing rests on public demand, economic conditions and technical developments. Nevertheless considerable progress towards the ideal has been made, and both Departments accept it as the objective to aim at. Post Office demands, priority lists and schedules now go in about two years ahead of the programme year.

It was at this stage when all these problems were acutely to the fore owing to the expansion of priority lists, that the magnitude of the entire problem could be reviewed at the highest levels in its main aspects—financial, staffing organisation and in relation to site purchases. It had to be so reviewed before a real expansion could be made and Post Office needs met in their proper order. Nevertheless it could not have been so reviewed until the priority system had been introduced and worked through in terms of individual cases. It was only then that Heads of Departments could be assured with confidence as to what was needed to fulfil Post Office policy for meeting demands for telephone service and for bringing other buildings up to a standard which could be realistically described. Major policy decisions were then taken.

The Ministry of Works were given assurances that the Post Office needs for a greatly expanded building programme were not confined to one year or two years. It arose from a very large residue of schemes of immediate high priority (the "A" and "B" cases) beyond which stood a further volume of schemes based on definite needs which could be expected to become acute in a few years. Therefore the Ministry were assured, subject to Government policy on capital investment, that there was every prospect of a sustained demand for greatly expanded programmes for a considerable time ahead. With these assurances the Ministry took vigorous action. They added a second Assistant Chief Architect's post to the one hitherto allocated to Post Office services and (broadly) increased their architectural staff on Post Office work by 50 per cent. Furthermore they decided that to meet the starting dates of the increased building programme private architects, commissioned on a partial service basis, should be engaged to assist with the work. Concurrently, all those concerned were exhorted to match on the Post Office side the increased flow of work from the Ministry's side and certain increases in Post Office staff have followed.

It has, of course, taken some years to get the vastly expanded programmes of planning and building moving in an orderly flow at sufficient speed and in sufficient volume. In fact, none of these objectives has yet been achieved in its entirety. However, where performance still falls short of planning or where a particularly high priority is not translated into early construction on site, it is not through failure of Ministry of Works or Post Office staff to appreciate what is urgent and what is not. Rather it arises through practical difficulties—e.g., in getting land and financial restrictions. The co-ordination of the activities of numerous groups of staff in both Departments requires, of course, a major and substantial effort not only in relation to individual schemes but (much more difficult) to keep the balance of the programme as a whole. Various machinery, regular and *ad hoc*, has been introduced for this purpose. In particular there have been periodical progress meetings between the administrative and professional staffs of both Departments, both at Headquarters and Regional level. At such meetings, not only

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can the number of cases falling back in their planned starting dates be established and the causes noted, discussed and questioned, but general tendencies and types of delaying factors can be noted, and revisions of policy considered where necessary. Now that the expanded programmes are well under way, it is probable that in future, progress meetings will be conducted entirely on a Regional basis—that is, a Post Office Regional basis. (While executive control of the progress of individual schemes is, broadly, devolved entirely to Regional Directors in the Post Office, most of the staff in Ministry of Works concerned with major building schemes are in London).

MINOR EXTENSIONS AND ADAPTATIONS

The whole system described above, however, applies only to complete new buildings and major extensions—work which in England at least, is controlled, and to a very large extent designed, in the Ministry of Works Chief Architect's Branch in London. The Post Office have also recently been spending over £1m. a year on minor extensions and adaptations to buildings—work carried out under the Ministry's Maintenance Branch, largely on a Regional basis and hence called "Maintenance Branch New Works." These works are most valuable to the Post Office in making old buildings last longer, enabling discarded manual telephone exchange accommodation to be used for postal purposes, adapting existing old buildings which have been bought or leased for Post Office purposes. There is, however, such an enormous variety in the nature and size of jobs—anything from fitting a cycle rack to almost reconstructing an old factory—that it is exceedingly difficult to systematise or control, to ensure that the best value is obtained for the £1m.-odd spent annually and to see that it is apportioned fairly between the different services and different Regions.

Control by central grading and programming of all individual schemes as in the case of the main Headquarters Architects programmes is clearly impossible. Instead the arrangements have been worked out as follows :

- (a) Each summer, Post Office Headquarters asks its Regional Directors to prepare lists of the schemes they require to be started in the following year's Maintenance Branch New Works programme and to give them to the appropriate Ministry of Works Regional Director and discuss them as necessary. (The lists cannot be exhaustive as some work is unforeseen but they should be as full as possible.)
- (b) In drawing up these lists, Post Office Regional Directors are asked to observe broadly the same criteria of priority as determined the admission of cases to the major programmes.
- (c) Ministry of Works Headquarters, also in the same summer, ask their Regional Directors to submit financial estimates of the work they could carry out in the following financial year to meet, as far as practicable, Post Office Regional Directors' urgent needs.
- (d) The totals of these estimates are discussed between Post Office and Ministry of Works Headquarters and Regional allotments made within an over-all total on the basis, broadly, of satisfying all the demands which

it seems practicable to meet, or, if there is not enough money for this, of giving Regions a broadly equivalent proportion of their needs.

- (e) The out-turn of expenditure is reported periodically and if it appears that more money is available through underspending in any Region or in the Headquarters Architects programme, further urgent demands for additional allocations in particular Regions are met.

Despite all these measures, effective central direction combined with a reasonable amount of flexibility and devolution of responsibility is much more difficult to attain in the Maintenance Branch New Works programme than in the Headquarters Architects' programme. Frankly, such a large programme consisting of such a very large number of individual jobs of so many totally different kinds and sizes presents administrative problems to which we have not yet found complete or final answers. Experience with this programme has reinforced the conclusions suggested above in respect of the Headquarters Architects' programme: a control of a building programme of this kind based primarily on a system of financial allocations is not wholly satisfactory. For one thing too much depends on forward estimating of the cost of a total programme—many of the component parts of which are not yet known. An element most hard to predict has been the amount spent each year on work started in previous years; if this expenditure runs far ahead of estimates there may be only a fraction left for starting new schemes in the year concerned. We have overcome this difficulty by giving separate allocations to each Region for expenditure on schemes newly started in the year concerned. Nevertheless too much still depends on financial estimates. The original estimates are based not only on Post Office needs but on what it is practicable to spend—that is, with regard to how far planning, site acquisition or other preliminary work has advanced and to staff capacity in the Ministry of Works. This latter element is of course adjusted as far as possible to Post Office needs; but it may not always be possible to recruit a large number of extra staff to meet a sudden upsurge of need and there will be a time-lag. Meanwhile no one wants to see the Ministry's staff capacity cut down in another Region simply because the Post Office needs, although considerable, are of slightly less pressing urgency than elsewhere. Hence, there is always the danger that "to him that hath shall be given." In making the annual allocations, this sort of thing can only be corrected—if at all—by "hunches"—or at least on incomplete information.

We have tried to ensure a common standard of urgency by the general admonition to observe broadly the same criteria as for the major programmes—but it is of necessity very general. In such cases as a straightforward extension of a sorting office or a telephone exchange (to increase the capacity of either to handle traffic), the same criteria of urgency can be applied as for complete new telephone exchanges or post offices—but what about concreting a muddy yard, fencing, partitioning in offices, renewing uneconomic but serviceable heating plant, and so on? What happens when, in an old Post Office building or one newly acquired, a certain piece of adaptation or extension work is obviously urgent and essential, but when it is also suggested that it would in the long run be not only convenient but economic to do a number of other improvements at the same time? One man may prefer to do the bare essentials

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only of two or three schemes, while another will prefer to make a complete job of one. There is clearly no final answer to these kind of problems; but we have tried to meet them in the same sort of way as for Headquarters Architects programmes although clearly we cannot apply the same methods—we cannot call for details of every scheme nor have each discussed between Regional and Headquarters officers. Believing, however, that the method of report followed by discussion to get the “feel” as well as the formal definition of urgency is right, we are now proceeding cautiously and experimentally by sample. As an additional check, on the last two occasions when Post Office Headquarters has sent out the annual summer requests to Regional Directors, very brief one-line descriptions of schemes estimated to cost over £2,000 have been asked for and rather fuller descriptions with reasons for urgency (still not more than three or four lines) for any schemes costing over £20,000. This enables us at Headquarters to make a few enquiries about individual cases and even occasional visits—not by way of withdrawing Regional Directors’ normal discretionary powers but to test by sample whether the same criteria of urgency are being applied both in selecting schemes and deciding their scope. This sort of thing plus informal discussion at any and every opportunity will, we hope, in due course result in establishing throughout the country, a common idea of what is understood by a scheme of sufficient urgency to go into a Maintenance Branch New Works programme, and furthermore how the scope of schemes in such programmes should be decided and what is good value for money. What is really required in administering an expenditure of this magnitude on such a heterogeneous collection of work is to be sure that the people making the *effective* decisions—which may not be the same as the formal decisions—not only have sound ideas and judgment but broadly the same sort of ideas and the same basis of judgment. Much more than the Headquarters Architects’ programme, the Maintenance Branch New Works programme depends on a great many people’s separate personal judgments. For the programme to work fairly, therefore, it is necessary for the separation to be broken down—which means a lot of people in one context or another meeting and talking to each other—and also a lot of people and as many senior people as possible going and *looking* at buildings. (The best possible plans never give the whole picture in these sort of cases.) This does not mean a large number of formal conferences or periodical tours—certainly not at Headquarters level. What is needed rather is just enough informal contact and discussion and some visiting to keep all responsible officers directly in touch with what is happening on the ground. Against such a background a system of Regional financial allocations can be applied reasonably realistically in the absence of any better instrument.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

There we may leave the present story. Much of course remains to be done before priority needs are being met as they should. Moreover, we are now giving increased attention to the other major problem of our building work—reducing costs. But that is a separate story. In the matter of priorities it is claimed that our system started on the right lines. What can we conclude from all this which can be of wider implication or interest? First, surely

that any system which attempts to allocate building resources between different types of use and at the same time between different geographical areas cannot be operated wholly in mathematical or financial terms. Buildings outlive their usefulness (or even get bombed) according to no very simple or settled pattern. Not only war damage but town planning schemes, transfers of industry, a whole variety of chance circumstances in past years, all combine to make general predictions about building needs—of these kinds at any rate—quite impossible. The only fair test is a test by examination of the facts of each case. Yet the test while applied to each case must consist of the uniform application of certain uniform principles. A hundred separate unco-ordinated arguments, conducted by different groups of people would not produce justice—it might well produce chaos. The argument—so far as there is argument—or, as we have more often found in the Post Office, discussion producing at least 95 per cent general agreement—all this must be conducted by the *same people*—at least on one side. If no completely quantitative tests can be devised—and surely this applies to most building or other capital programmes and not only that of the Post Office—then one is thrown back on personal judgment—let us hope intelligent, unbiased and experienced—but still personal and therefore differing. There should, if possible, be the minimum of chance personal differences of view affecting treatment of particular cases. If the same people cannot make all the assessments then there must be the closest personal consultation between all who do.

Even that however is not enough. The decisions must be based as far as possible on clear simple principles capable of being described very simply indeed. It has been mentioned above how our full formal definitions of priority for the Headquarters Architects' programme have been simplified in practice to a very brief formula. The principles must not only be clear and simple but likely to command respect by all concerned. In the Post Office we took care to agree the whole procedure with the main Departments concerned and to do everything we could at every point to carry our Regional Directors and their staffs with us. We also, in accordance with long-standing Post Office tradition, explained exactly what we proposed—and periodically what we had done—to our two full Whitley Councils. The question of morale of staff, in general, and managerial staff in particular is, of course, of the greatest importance—but easy to overlook if one is in too much of a hurry—in any priority questions of this kind. Anyone with experience in the armed forces will testify to the overwhelming feeling of the utter irrationality of the controlling machine which can overtake not only rank and file but regimental officers—not necessarily because the organisation is irrational or inefficient but through the impossibility of "getting over" what is happening and why—through the "fog of war" and requirements of security. Despite these difficulties the best military commanders know the appalling effect such feelings can have on morale and take what pains they can to "put everyone in the picture." Even without war-time confusion and security this feeling of the irrationality of the machine can and does arise in any large organisation in relation to any rationing or priority system and particularly to anything where results necessarily appear so slowly as in building. People who have been ill-housed for years and heard much of plans and programmes are apt to be convinced of the good faith of the planners by nothing short of a

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contractor's bulldozer on a site. This applies to the responsible and intelligent local manager as well as to the rank and file. And who can blame him? It was for this reason that we had nearly always devoted more than half the morning out of a full day meeting with Regional staffs to a description and explanation of how the system and the programmes—both Headquarters Architects and Maintenance Division—were working out generally. Regional Directors generally arranged for all their Branches to be fully represented, not only the buildings branches, but postal, telecommunications and engineering branches, who felt the effect of new buildings, or the lack of them.

To sum up: the present writer's experience with building priority systems in the Post Office suggests that they must be based on clear simple tests—not wholly mathematical formulæ—which can be readily understood and accepted by everyone directly and indirectly concerned, that they must be applied by personal direct discussion of particular cases and that the most important thing of all, requiring the most sustained effort, is to see that the whole process is really made intelligible and credible to *everyone* who will suffer or enjoy its effects. The details of the Post Office priority system may possibly not be applicable to any other organisation—they may be changed within the Post Office itself as conditions change—but it may be that the principles summarised above—obvious as they may appear—could well be extended over wider fields than those where they are now applied.

APPENDIX

PRIORITY CATEGORIES FOR BUILDING CASES

1. Telephone Exchanges

"A" (i) Exchanges for which the number of equipment waiters is now significant. (The term "significant" cannot be rigidly defined but suggested figures are over 100 waiters, or 5 per cent. of the working connections, whichever is less.)

(ii) Special cases where although the number of equipment waiters is not at present significant it will be very high (say 500 or more) by the end of the programme year in which the exchange is expected to be Ready for Service.

(iii) Trunk mechanisation schemes (including STD) at Zone Centres required to avoid a major extension of the present manual trunk exchange or its associated equipment, and extensions of important trunk exchanges which will be seriously overloaded at the expected Ready for Service date.

"B" (i) Exchanges not warranting Category "A" treatment where the number of equipment waiters will be significant (as defined above) by the end of the programme year in which the exchange is expected to be Ready for Service.

(ii) Exchanges where limited building is required now to avoid major equipment replacement and/or building work within the next few years.

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(iii) Zone centre mechanisation schemes not warranting Category "A" treatment.

(iv) Important switching centres at which lack of manual board equipment or switching plant will lead to exhaustion of exchanges dependent upon them for traffic outlets before the expected Ready for Service date for the new equipment.

(v) Important group centres where equipment extension is necessary to avoid delaying the introduction of trunk mechanisation at a Zone Centre.

(vi) Exchanges where serious maintenance or service difficulties are being experienced.

(vii) Exchanges where retention of the existing equipment is giving rise to exceptionally costly staffing arrangements.

"C" All exchanges needing equipment by the anticipated Ready for Service date, other than those included in Categories "A" and "B."

Note : The term "Expected Ready for Service" date in the above definitions means the Ready for Service date which could be achieved if the building were included in the building programme under consideration.

2. Repeater Stations

"A" New intermediate carrier, radio-relay and, exceptionally, terminal stations required for urgent approved routes.

"B" Terminal stations necessary to permit the provision of plant to meet urgent outstanding circuit requirements.

"C" Terminal stations necessary to permit the provision of plant to meet the balance of authorised circuit requirements.

3. Sorting Offices (including District and Sub-District Offices)

"A" Exceptionally serious deficiencies in accommodation causing intolerable working conditions and/or major departure from approved standards of service or security.

"B" Deficiencies in accommodation necessitating departure from approved standards of service or of security.

"C" Deficiencies seriously affecting efficiency and/or justifying staff complaint.

4. Public Offices (including Branch Offices)

"B" Accommodation insufficient to permit tolerable service to the public and/or justifying public complaint.

"C" Deficiencies causing material congestion and justifying staff or public complaint.

5. Stores and Workshops

"B" Accommodation insufficient to provide tolerable working or storage conditions or security against damage or theft.

"C" Deficiencies in accommodation such as to impair working efficiency or proper conditions for the staff.

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6. *All types of accommodation* (other than telephone exchanges)
"D" Accommodation substantially below approved standards.

7. *Welfare*

Due attention should be paid to any deficiencies in welfare accommodation, and Regional Directors should place such cases in the appropriate priority categories as the circumstances may require.

Note : The definitions under items 3-6 apply to the conditions which are expected to exist by the time the new building would be ready for service assuming that it would be included in the building programme under consideration.

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The Conventions of Local Authorities in the West Midlands

PART I—COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCILS

By HENRY MADDICK and E. P. PRITCHARD

Based on a study by The Extra-Mural Studies Department of Birmingham University, this article is concerned with the informal practices which distinguish the working of eight County Borough Councils in the West Midlands.

IN any realistic description of British central government, prominence is given to the "conventions," practices which are added to those prescribed by law, and are adopted simply because they are found useful.* The working of the Cabinet, and its relation to the other parts of the machinery of government, are almost entirely based on "conventions" rather than formal laws. Local government also has its conventions, but far less is known about them. Many books on local government do little more than transpose statutory provisions, but any attempt to give a realistic account of its working must give due weight to the conventions.

Professor W. J. M. Mackenzie, in *Public Administration* for Winter, 1951, drew attention to this gap in our knowledge, and suggested possible ways of filling it. He gave the term "conventions" a wide meaning, including for instance the attitude of the electorate and the quality of councillors. We admit the possibility of this interpretation, but feel that it would accord better with generally accepted usage if it were limited to practices adopted by elected representatives and officers in the running of the Authority. These practices will be found to vary from authority to authority as conventions do from legislature to legislature—British, French or American.

But even this narrower meaning shows up a gap in our knowledge, and this article, based on a regional survey organised by the Department of Extra-Mural Studies of Birmingham University, is intended as a contribution towards filling it.

THE FIELD OF ENQUIRY

This survey covers Herefordshire, Shropshire, South Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire. It was chosen because it is the University Extra-Mural area, but apart from the omission of North Staffordshire, it is the area normally denoted by the name West Midlands. The County Boroughs, and their populations, are Birmingham (1,111,700), Coventry (267,300), Dudley (64,390), Smethwick (74,570), Walsall (114,600), West Bromwich (89,640), Wolverhampton (155,400) and Worcester (63,510). In each of these eight boroughs, a research group was formed, consisting usually of

*Wade and Phillips, after quoting Dicey, say "But other writers regard them as no more than practices which experience shows to be necessary for developing, within the law, existing political institutions." E. C. S. Wade and G. Godfrey Phillips. *Constitutional Law*. Longmans, 1950, 4th edition. Page 8.

senior officers of the Authority, working under the leadership of one of the authors of this article. We are greatly indebted to the members of these groups for the time which they gave up to this work, and for the care which they devoted to the production of full and accurate reports. Each group compiled a factual report on the conventions of the Authority concerned, and to make possible complete frankness, the reports have been regarded as confidential, an assurance being given that, although the intention was to publish an article based on them, it would deal only with general trends and not with individual Authorities. This article will not therefore identify Authorities by any phrase more specific than "a large Authority" (population over 150,000) or "a medium-sized Authority" (population between 60,000 and 150,000). It will be in the main factual, bringing together the information given by the members of the groups; evaluation will not be attempted, but reasons for the growth of these conventions will be suggested.

The starting point of any enquiry into the practical working of local government must be the committee. All but the smallest Authorities appoint a number of committees, and detailed and effective discussion often takes place in these rather than in full council. But how much freedom of action have these committees? If they wish, councils can delegate many functions to them, and even without formal delegation it is still possible to reach much the same result by the growth of an understanding that the independence of committees should be respected as far as possible. There is considerable *de facto* delegation, often not covered by any formal scheme, varying from council to council and from committee to committee according to local conventions. This raises a problem of co-ordination, and here other conventions have developed, which add substantially to the more formal part of the machinery of government.

When the formal and conventional relations of committees to each other and to the council has become clear, it is then possible to ask how committees work. Like any other committee, they need a lead, and it makes a great deal of difference who gives this lead. This depends to some extent on personalities, but it depends chiefly on conventions, which affect the part played by chairmen, other members of committees, and officers.

At this stage it becomes necessary, in all but one of the Authorities considered, to take account of the party group meeting. Some would maintain that even the existence of this meeting is a convention as concerns local government. One Authority, for instance, makes official diary entries and provides accommodation for a political group which in local government law does not exist. Certainly the conventions involved in the party group's relations to the council and to its committees are among the most important.

There is one group of conventions of a somewhat different nature. Each Authority makes some effort to explain its actions to the public, but some carry this further than others, and the length to which "public relations" are carried can be said to be largely a matter of convention.

The topics to be discussed, then, can be grouped under five main headings: delegation to committees; co-ordination; policy making; the working of the party system; and public relations.

DELEGATION TO COMMITTEES

In most of the eight Authorities, decisions made by committees are generally accepted by Council. Yet in only two Authorities do formal schemes of delegation exist. However, the extent to which the conventional patterns of delegation are used and the methods of application vary enormously. The powers of levying a rate or borrowing money cannot be delegated to committees, and as a result the annual estimates are always considered in Council, but, in one large Authority, and one of medium size, almost all the remaining powers have been formally delegated to committees; in these two Authorities, even sub-committees, despite legal limitations on the delegation of powers to them, are in practice given considerable freedom. One large Authority, and one medium-sized Authority, also formally delegate wide powers to committees, but in these two cases important matters of policy, and individual items involving expenditure above a stated limit, must be considered by the Council.

At the opposite extreme is a medium-sized Authority which delegates very little save planning approval, and requires very full minutes, members feeling that they want to be aware of everything that is happening. In another medium-sized Authority, matters relating to salaries, wages and conditions of service are delegated to the General Purposes Committee (which includes all members of the Council), but this is the only express delegation. There are, however, two sets of committee minutes, "report" minutes being circulated to all members of the Council, and "private" minutes only to members of the committee concerned. "Private" minutes include matters which are trivial or incomplete, or on which no action is taken, and matters going to the General Purposes Committee. The division is made by the Town Clerk, whose decision is in practice never challenged. Where necessary "report" minutes include a brief note on past events which have not been reported to the Council. The question whether members not serving on a particular committee can obtain access to its private minutes has not arisen, but access would probably be given.

In the remaining two Authorities the position is more complex. One, a large Authority, delegates wide powers to committees, but despite its size the Council requires copies of all committee minutes, and these are probably fuller than they would be in any small town. There are no "private" minutes apart from these. The Council minutes include reports from all committees every month. These reports are divided into two parts—the first, matters referred to the Council for decision, either under Standing Orders, or because they involve political issues; the second, matters which are there for information, and which cannot be rescinded though questions may be asked about them. Sub-committees are apt to find their position difficult here, because members are unwilling to allow them sufficient freedom. In the remaining Authority, which is of medium size, members of the Council resent delegation to committees, which will then do things about which they know little and on which they cannot answer their constituents' questions, but these same members, when serving on committees, often resent any questioning of the committee's powers or the wisdom of its acts. As a result of this ambivalent attitude, delegation in this Authority is in a special sense

a matter of convention; various resolutions have delegated powers to committees in the past, but no attempt is made to bring these resolutions together, or to make clear the exact powers of committees.

In every Authority we found the Education Committee was by far the most independent—probably a legacy from the days of the independent School Board. In most cases, minutes were kept by the Education Office staff, not by the Town Clerk; letters were addressed directly by it to the Ministry; and its meetings were given the atmosphere of Council meetings by the receipt of reports from sub-committees and by the statutory necessity to admit the public.

Summing up the position with regard to delegation, then, it is evident that, in seven out of the eight Authorities, committees are given in various ways a considerable degree of independence. This is an inevitable result of the increase of business, and though some councillors resist it in theory, feeling that they should have a knowledge of all matters coming before their council, they find in practice that the volume of the minutes is such that they cannot read them from cover to cover. The exact position in any one Authority is usually complex, being a blend of formal delegation and convention. Detailed historical research would be necessary if all the factors which have brought it about were to be isolated, but the following trends can be noticed.

First, there is a tendency for Authorities to delegate more freely as they increase in size, though there may be some resistance to this tendency, particularly where the increase in size has been very rapid. Secondly, there is the relation between the background of councillors, particularly the occupations predominant among them, and the conventions they find congenial for the discharge of council duties. Finally there is the influence of individuals—a particular convention may owe its origin to the suggestion of a member or chief officer, past or present, although in such cases the suggestion would not have been accepted unless it was in keeping with local traditions.

CO-ORDINATION

Since committees have in general so much freedom of action, arrangements for co-ordination are of considerable importance, if the Authority is to act effectively as a unit. Standing Orders usually include instructions to committees on such matters as financial and establishments procedure, but for the most part co-ordination is based on conventions. The Town Clerk plays an essential part. Assisted by the committee clerks, who work in carefully devised co-operation with one another, he is able to keep in touch with the work of all committees, and if there is any divergence of policy or overlapping he will almost certainly take quiet but effective steps which will lead to the matter being put right. In relation to the carrying out of policy, his action, aided by Standing Orders, by special committees or sub-committees for establishment matters, and by general awareness of need, usually secures uniformity of practice. In such matters as the appointment and promotion of staff, and the use of transport, co-ordination can be secured in these ways. Co-ordination in the formation of policy is, however, a much more difficult matter, for committees are normally set up to deal with

particular aspects of the Authority's work, and it is necessary to ensure that at some stage the various aspects are brought together and each problem considered as a whole.

In theory, policy making is the work of the Council, to which committees report, but in practice the full Council only plays a continuously important part in this in the one Authority which delegates very little to committees. In all others, there is a committee which plays a part, usually an important one, in the co-ordination of policy. In four Authorities this committee is the General Purposes Committee: in one of them it is concerned in most broad policy decisions, often working through a special purposes sub-committee or through *ad hoc* joint committees; in a second it consists of all members of the Council, and has an important sub-committee which includes all chairmen of standing committees; in a third it shares the work of co-ordination with the Finance Committee, their relative importance in this field apparently varying from time to time; and in the fourth there is also an Establishments Committee, which co-ordinates staffing and administration, and a Finance Committee, which also plays a part in co-ordination, though both these committees report to the General Purposes Committee. Of the three remaining Authorities, one has a Policy Advisory Committee, and two rely upon their Finance Committees, whose examination of the financial aspects of proposals includes their broader implications.

These committees work in close contact with the Town Clerk, who plays an essential part in all aspects of co-ordination, and to a varying extent with the Treasurer also. In most cases party group meetings are also important, both in informing members of what is happening on committees other than their own, and in dealing with clashes between committees or overlapping. In one Authority, however, the Council is not organised on party lines, and in another, the Authority in which the full Council really does co-ordinate, party groups are mainly concerned with Council agendas.

As with delegation, then, it may be said that the position differs widely between one Authority and another. Each has its arrangements for co-ordination, but they vary considerably and committees bearing the same name (such as General Purposes Committee or Finance Committee) are of very different types and play very different parts.

POLICY MAKING

Having cleared the ground by considering relations between the Councils and their Committees, it is now possible to ask how policy emerges. Three matters in particular need to be considered; how much influence have chief officers? What is the position of chairmen of committees? What part is played by party group meetings? The answers to these questions must depend to a varying extent on personalities, and will therefore differ at different times, but there is for each Authority a continuing general pattern, which may be said to constitute the conventions of policy making.

The advice of chief officers is everywhere of fundamental importance, but it remains only advice, and is by no means always accepted. Members of several of these Authorities, and of one in particular, would be sensitive to any suggestion that officers make policy, but it is generally recognised

that their advice is and should be influential, though the exact position in each case is affected by the nature of a committee's work, the personalities of the chairman and chief officer, and their length of service. Where technical considerations are involved, the advice of officers is rarely questioned. The Children's Officer and the Welfare Officer have in general less influence than other chief officers, and one reason which has been advanced for this is that their work deals not with technical matters, but with individual "human" cases, on which members are more likely to have views of their own. Other explanations, however, have also been suggested—that the work of the departments is less, so that committees can go into more detail; and that both departments and the corresponding committees are relatively new, so that conventions which would allow officers more freedom have had little time to develop. On the facts available it is impossible to say how much weight should be given to each of these reasons, though it can be said that these are the kind of factors on which the extent of a chief officer's influence depends.

The position of chairmen of committees differs between one Authority and another to a far greater extent than does the influence of chief officers. In one Authority chairmen of committees are so important that members of the public often write directly to them, but this Authority is one of the smaller county boroughs, is not run on party lines, and has placed no limit on a chairman's term of office. Normally, the chairman is not as important as this. It is usually a convention that he should maintain close contact with the work of any department responsible to his committee, and be available for consultation by the chief officer or the Town Clerk between meetings of the committee. From frequent discussions with his chief officer he may acquire a knowledge of the work of the department, and ideas about its future development, which make him the best informed and most influential member of his committee, but this is no more than a possibility, and the extent to which it is realised depends on various circumstances. Where party organisation is strong, he may be little more than the spokesman of his committee and its officers at the party group meeting, and in at least three Authorities he is often little more than that; in two of these his period of office as a chairman of a particular committee is normally limited to three years. But even in these two cases exceptions may be made to the rule, and a chairman of outstanding personality can become very influential. In three of the Authorities, conventions tend to limit a chairman's powers, in three they tend to increase them, and in two the position varies from one committee to another. But in all of them he can become important if he has an outstanding personality, a strong and continuing interest in the work of a particular committee, or a position of considerable power within his party.

Party group meetings are of great importance. With one exception, the Councils are organised on party lines, and members of the Council belonging to a particular party usually hold group meetings. In these meetings there is vigorous and often searching (though sometimes emotional) discussion of matters of policy, ending in a decision on the party's attitude towards matters on the agenda of the next Council meeting. In one case, even

committee agenda are discussed in this way. More is said on this topic in the next section.

In central government, the convention has grown up of consulting organised groups and interests before reaching policy decisions likely to affect them, and it seemed possible that a similar convention might have arisen in local government, but in fact there seems to be very little consultation of this kind. It has taken place about development plans, and the local Chamber of Commerce is often consulted about the hours of closing of shops at Christmas. We came across other examples—one Authority was particularly sensitive to the views of the local Trades Council (representative of local trade unionism); another discussed with local industrialists courses to be provided at the Technical College; and several consulted various organisations about traffic regulations. But in general this practice is not liked by members. They feel that they are in sufficiently close touch with local matters (they are often members of the bodies concerned) to be aware already of the needs and views of groups. If the advice of any organisation is of particular importance, a representative of it can usually be co-opted to the appropriate committee, although for various reasons this is not popular either, and is usually limited to the cases where it is required by law.

It might also have been expected that national agreements, formal or informal, would play a part in determining policy. This is in fact true of national agreements concerning salaries, wages and conditions of service which are in general accepted by all the Authorities, although several have reservations about the salaries of the more highly paid chief officers, and several find some of the lower rates of pay insufficient. Outside this field national agreements play no part. Meetings of Local Authority Associations and professional associations spread new ideas, and, in that way, influence policy, but they do not lead to national agreements, even of an informal kind. Agreements among Authorities in one or more Counties are found, covering such matters as boarding out allowances and payments for services rendered by other Local Authorities.

THE PARTY SYSTEM

Conventions determine the relations between the group meeting and other parts of the machinery of local government and these are very important. The members of the research groups, who were mainly officers, had necessarily little knowledge of the working of the party system, but it was usually possible to find out more from members of the Councils concerned. In one case the two party leaders attended a meeting of the research group, and provided full and valuable information, and in another the senior members of the Council were members of the research group.

The general character of party group meetings has become well established. In the Labour Party, rules are compiled nationally, and local parties are recommended to adopt them as Standing Orders. The agenda is usually based on that of the forthcoming Council meeting. It is not normal practice to discuss matters about to come before committees, though in one Authority this is often done, and in two others, matters about to come before the General Purposes Committee are discussed. Other matters may also be discussed

by the group. Generally the chairman of the appropriate committee acts as its spokesman at the group meeting ; if the chairman is of the other party, there will probably be one among the members of the committee present who has a particularly close knowledge of its business. The spokesman, aided if necessary by other members of the committee, will be expected to give a factual report. He is not likely to distinguish between the views of members and the advice of officers, but will be expected to have a full knowledge of the facts. If necessary, consideration of a matter will be deferred until further information is available.

In one large Authority meetings between chief officers and the chairman are held to go through the council agenda as it affects his particular committee. The convention has arisen of holding this meeting early enough to ensure that it precedes the party meeting as well. Thus the chairman is in possession of the facts and also professional views on problems.

Party discipline is looser in Conservative groups than in Labour groups, but in neither party is it as rigid as in national politics and in most of these Authorities (though there is one exception) a member who does not follow the party line is unlikely to incur any penalty. Since group meetings are usually held after committee meetings, how do members of a committee know what line to take, if the matters they are discussing have not yet reached the party group? This does not usually present much difficulty. Many questions do not raise party issues, and can be dealt with as they arise. When party differences are important, the views of each of the parties are usually well known, or can easily be predicted. Even so, matters will arise on which there is uncertainty about the line to be taken by one or both of the parties. Practices have arisen which cover this point. If known beforehand party leaders would be consulted. Failing this the matter could be deferred until the next meeting of the committee, by which time the group would have had a chance to discuss it.

In one large authority if the majority group disagrees with the committee's decision, the matter is referred back to it by passing a resolution to this effect in council.

Except in the Authority which is not run on party lines, the allocation of members to committees, and the election of the Mayor, Aldermen and chairmen of committees are regulated by agreements between the parties. These conventions vary more widely than most others from one Authority to another, and even from one period to another within the same Authority. In one, parties are represented on each committee in the same proportion as on the Council as a whole, but in the others, though the party in power normally has a majority on all committees, this majority is greater on those of greater importance. Factors taken into account when allocating members to committees include their wishes, party strengths, the relative status of the various committees, and, in one Authority, an attempt to obtain representation of each ward on each committee. Conventions relating to the election of chairmen of committees are particularly liable to sudden change.* There

*"Conventions are numerous and vary in character from a rule which is as invariably observed as if it was enforceable by legal process to a practice which will be abandoned when there is a change in the circumstances from which it arose." Wade and Phillips, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

THE CONVENTIONS OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN THE WEST MIDLANDS

are two main methods, the first to allot all chairmanships to the party in power, and the second to share them in proportion to the strengths of the parties. Arguments of fairness can be adduced in favour of the second, but difficulties arise when a chairman belonging to the minority party has to defend in council decisions of a committee on which his opponents have a majority. In four Authorities, the first method is used, in two, the second, but of these one is considering changing from the first to the second, while another has recently changed from the second to the first. In one Authority, the party in power takes chairmanships of all major committees, but not necessarily all others. The choice of Mayor is usually the result of agreement between the parties; in one Authority the office is shared between them in an agreed ratio based on their strengths, but in the others a number of factors, of which seniority is usually the most important, are taken into account. The Mayor is often regarded as outside party politics and shielded carefully from party association during his term of office. Aldermen are usually chosen in proportion to party strengths, though on one Authority they are all from the majority party, and in another the senior Councillor is normally elected when a vacancy occurs.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Council meetings are open to the public, their minutes can be consulted, and they are reported in the Press. But much of importance is done in committee meetings, which are not open to the Press or public (except meetings of the Education Committee), and in party group meetings, which are always private. How far are attempts made to supplement the information which can be obtained from Council meetings? Two opposite considerations affect the growth of conventions on this matter. If public opinion is to play the part which it should, some information must be made available on the background of matters coming before the Council, but on the other hand harm may be done if the public makes up its mind on partial or inaccurate reports.

Matters coming before committees (other than the Education Committee) are usually regarded as confidential; in one Authority the chairman of a committee is expected to inform the Press of matters of public interest arising at a meeting of the committee, and in two others "leaks" to the Press are not infrequent, but in general, committee decisions are known only to members and officers until they have been reported to the Council. When matters come before the Council, however, information is made generally available about the reasons for actions taken. Two of these Authorities have a Public Relations Officer and a monthly news sheet; one other has a monthly news sheet, and one has a Public Relations Assistant. Whatever the formal arrangements, however, journalists are encouraged to approach the officers of the Authority, who usually give them a great deal of factual information. Occasionally complaints are made of Press inaccuracy or of failure to give sufficient information to the Press, and these complaints, having "news value," tend to be widely reported, but in general these Local Authorities, with one exception, seem to find the position reasonably satisfactory.

REASONS FOR THE CONVENTIONS

The Research Groups were mainly concerned with recording conventions, but an attempt was made also to find reasons for them. In many cases the reasons are obvious. It is only to be expected, for instance, that larger Authorities should on the whole delegate powers to committees more freely than smaller Authorities, that officers should play a larger part in policy making where technical considerations are involved, and that conventions should develop around party group meetings. In such cases the reasons lie on the surface. But the growth of conventions in these Authorities seems also to be the result of deeper factors. One important point is that members differ widely between one Authority and another, but officers tend to be of the same type everywhere. Chief officers are in general very able men with a legal, financial, or technical training, who are anxious to get things done quietly and efficiently. In getting things done, they must work with members of their Authorities, and are usually skilful and tactful in finding the best way of doing things. They "sense" when they should act themselves, and when they should refer matters to the Council, when they should give a lead and when that would be resented, and when a matter is likely to involve "politics." They can usually suggest remedies when difficulties arise. Officers try to keep the machinery of government running the way most acceptable to the members of their Authorities, and from their efforts to do so practices arise which soon settle into conventions. The relation between members and officers is of basic importance in the growth of conventions, and here interesting changes are taking place.

At the end of the nineteenth century, when the machinery of councils and committees took its present legal shape, members of these Authorities were in general of much greater ability and standing than their officers, and expected to give them instructions in some detail. Today, however, the chief officers are highly qualified experts, whose knowledge of affairs may well be greater than that of many of the members to whom they are responsible, and it is natural that they should tend to play an increasingly prominent part. This tendency is partly offset by the growth of party politics, which leads to the taking of effective decisions at meetings in which the officers play no part. Changes in the kind and amount of work to be done by Local Authorities and in the type of Councillors now elected, the growth of a highly qualified municipal civil service, and the spread of party politics, are the basic general factors behind the growth of conventions in local government. Factors peculiar to individual authorities also play their part, and sometimes it will be found that a member or officer of outstanding personality has initiated practices which have become generally accepted and have settled into conventions.

CONCLUSIONS


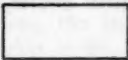
It is clear that in these eight Authorities conventions are important, and that they add substantially to the machinery described in the text books. The extent to which committees are given a free hand is largely a matter of convention; it differs widely between Authorities, but within any one Authority remains fairly constant, changing or being modified only over long periods of time. Co-ordination, which in text-book descriptions of

local government looks like a weak point, is in fact dealt with by a variety of conventional devices, subtly linked. The party group meeting is enabled by the growth of conventions to fit itself fairly smoothly into the older machinery of government. In nearly all these Authorities it is an important element in policy making. So also is the influence of chief officers. On the other hand, the part played by chairmen of committees differs widely. Consultation of organised groups, however, though an accepted convention of central government, hardly exists in local government. Information about council decisions is everywhere available to those who seek it, but the extent to which there is an active public relations policy is largely a matter of convention in each Authority.

We have pointed to some common factors which seem to us to underlie the growth of these conventions, but on the whole we have found variation rather than similarity. Each Authority has its own conventions, which persist and lead to a predictable pattern of behaviour, but the pattern is peculiar to it, being a product of local characteristics and habits, and influenced by outstanding individuals of successive generations. The lament heard that central control has produced a dull uniformity in local government finds no support from our enquiry. The impression left is rather one of Local Authorities retaining a marked degree of individuality, and of the conventions as the very essence of that individuality.


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Finance of the Gas Industry

By IDRIS HICKS

Mr. Hicks is Lecturer in the Department of Accountancy and Financial Administration in the University of Sheffield.

THE gas industry passed into public ownership on 1st May, 1949. The structure adopted for this industry as compared with those adopted for the coal and electricity industries is significant for the degree of decentralisation. It has been said by Mr. Goodman that the structure "is more federal than unitary." The important elements are the twelve independent Area Boards created by the Statute. The Gas Council (composed of the chairmen of the individual Area Boards together with an independent chairman and deputy chairman) was deemed necessary as a central body that could speak for the industry as a whole on matters that could not be confined to any one area as, for example, finance, labour relations and research. It exercises no controlling powers, but carries out functions delegated to it by the Area Boards and certain common services laid upon it by Statute. The Council recognises the limitations upon its authority for it stated in its 1st. Report (para. 29) that "the structure is largely an experiment in co-operation by consent and the relations between the Council and the Area Boards will no doubt be a matter of evolution."

The gas industry belongs to that group of public corporations which are financially independent (of the State) unless resort has to be had to the Treasury guarantee of the principal (either stock or temporary loans) and the payment of interest thereon. Subject to the arrangements made under the Finance Act, 1956, and to be extended until March, 1959, by which the nationalised industries are required to meet their capital requirements from Exchequer advances, the industry is expected to raise its capital requirements in the market in the usual way, but with the advantage that the Treasury guarantee of principal and interest gives the stock offered the characteristics of gilt edged stock.

According to the Council's 7th Report (para. 26-27) the industry is required to work within its share of the Capital Investment Programme and each Area Board is required to settle with the Minister of Power a general programme of work involving substantial outlay on capital account. The Gas Council is to be consulted before Ministerial approval is given.

The industry has drawn up and embarked upon a programme of research, reorganisation and development which creates heavy demands upon capital resources, and the rest of this paper is concerned with the method of providing the finance and a discussion of some of the implications of the method adopted.

FINANCING THE INDUSTRY

The Gas Act, 1948, provides that with the consent of the Minister of Power and the approval of the Treasury the Gas Council may borrow money by the issue of British Gas Stock for any or all of the following purposes:

(a) the redemption of any British Gas Stock,

- (b) the provision of money for meeting any expenditure incurred by any Area Board or by the Gas Council in connection with any works, the cost of which is properly chargeable to capital account,
- (c) the provision of any working capital by any Area Board or the Gas Council,
- (d) the provision of any money required for the payment of compensation by Area Boards under this Act, except payment to local authorities in respect of loans and advances,
- (e) any other purposes for which capital moneys are properly applicable by any Area Board or the Gas Council including the repayment of any money temporarily borrowed for any purposes mentioned in this subsection,
- (f) any other payment which any Area Board or the Gas Council are authorised to make and which ought in the opinion of the Gas Council be spread over a period of years,

and may allocate responsibility for its servicing to the individual Area Boards in accordance with schemes agreed with the Minister of Power. Stock issued in initial compensation is allocated to the Boards on the basis of "the extent to which the assets for which the stock was issued vested in or were subsequently transferred to the respective Boards" whilst stock issued subsequently for capital purposes is allocated on the basis of "the capital requirements of the Boards and of the Council." To assist in determining the amount of capital to be raised by the issue of British Gas Stock and the proper allocation of stock once issued, the Council is empowered to obtain periodical estimates of the sums each Board will require to be provided in this way. In practice, the industry has first met its capital requirements out of borrowings from the banking system, under Treasury guarantee, and then at suitable intervals has funded the borrowings by the issue of British Gas Stock.

Each Area Board and the Gas Council, with the consent of the Minister and the approval of the Treasury, may borrow temporarily by way of overdraft or otherwise such sum as the Board or Council may require, but, according to the Council's 5th Report (para. 22), the Boards "have agreed that the Gas Council shall exercise the right . . . for the whole of the industry rather than that each Board should obtain separate powers."

British Gas Stock is redeemable stock, that is to say the industry must provide for the repayment of borrowings over certain periods prescribed by the Minister with the approval of the Treasury. The prescribed period in respect of each issue of stock so far has been 90 years from the date of issue. The Gas (Stock) Regulations, 1949, provide for the creation of a Redemption Fund Account in respect of each issue of stock, such funds to be built up by equal yearly or half-yearly instalments which will be sufficient without accumulations, to redeem or purchase the stock to which the account relates at the expiration of the prescribed periods. The first contribution to the Redemption Fund Account is to be made within twelve months (or six months if contributions are half-yearly) from the commencement of the prescribed period. Any contributions not immediately required for redemption purposes are made available to the Boards as temporary loans.

Contributions are calculated on an equal annual basis over the prescribed periods according to the total amount of stock outstanding and the Council calls upon the Area Boards to contribute in proportion to their shares of responsibility for the stock issued and makes contribution in respect of the stock for which it is, itself, responsible.

DEPRECIATION POLICY

To appreciate the method by which British Gas Stock is redeemed it is necessary to understand the depreciation policy of the industry, for it is through this policy that redemption is effected.

Depreciation, as a policy in ordinary commercial enterprise, is a method of spreading the historical cost of fixed assets over their estimated working life. The procedure is not fundamentally concerned with the replacement of the assets, although in so far as the depreciation charge can be said to restrict the amount of profit which may be withdrawn from the business without impairing capital, it might be said that resources are being retained in the business which may be used as a contribution toward replacement of the assets at the end of their period of serviceability. This was the view of the late P. D. Leake, a leading English authority, who considered the term "expired capital outlay" to be more appropriate than the term depreciation.¹ The problem of replacing assets, which is complicated still further by rising costs, is a separate problem of finding the necessary resources either in the form of new capital or out of profits which would otherwise have been held available for distribution as dividend. A further problem is the availability of liquid resources at the time when replacement has to be effected. This problem led to the development of sinking funds. A sinking fund is a fund built up by equal annual contributions from revenue which are matched by the investment of equivalent amounts of cash outside the business. Such investments together with the interest it is anticipated they will earn are designed to produce the amount required either to repay a loan or replace an asset at the end of a given period. Prior to nationalisation of the gas industry the municipal undertakings made great use of sinking funds for the redemptions of loans and in so doing also succeeded in spreading the historical cost of fixed assets over successive revenue accounts. The technique was appropriate having regard to the method by which municipal undertakings acquired their fixed assets. In the majority of cases a loan was raised for the purpose under the terms of a loan consent given by the appropriate government department. The loan consent indicated the period of the loan which was usually well within the life of the asset the loan was raised to acquire, so that before the asset was exhausted the loan would be repaid out of revenue. Obviously, then, depreciation provisions of the commercial kind designed to spread the historical cost of an asset over its estimated working life were not necessary since the cost of the asset was spread over the shorter period of the loan and at the same time the sinking fund ensured a sufficiency of cash to repay the loan at maturity. At the appropriate time the cost of replacement of the asset was made the subject of a new loan consent. Divergences of actual interest earned from the rate used in calculating the annual contribution were adjusted when authority was granted to charge the

annual contribution together with the theoretical rate of interest to revenue annually and to credit the annual interest received to revenue of each year so that differences were automatically adjusted each year throughout the life of the fund. This type of fund is called an "accumulating sinking fund," and is to be contrasted with the "non-accumulating sinking fund," which ignores interest and simply divides the amount of the loan by the number of years in the loan period.

The statutory undertakings, on the other hand, were hampered by legislation in their attempts to pursue a proper policy with regard to depreciation and development. The effectiveness of successive methods of control of gas prices depended upon control over the amount of capital such undertakings could raise and the reserves, including renewals funds, they might accumulate. Parliament took the view that public utility undertakings should be maintained out of the revenue of each year so that any capital works representing development as against renewal of existing plant had to be financed out of new capital issues. Since, to do this, statutory companies had to seek new capital powers, it was possible for Parliament to make periodic reviews of their operations. As a result of this legislation, statutory companies seemed content to operate on a renewals basis, either wholly or partially, by which instead of spreading the historical cost of an asset over its estimated working life they tended to charge it in full against the revenue account of the year in which it was acquired. If it was designed to replace another asset then the net cost of replacement was charged against the revenue account of the year in which replacement was effected. At the same time they waged a continuous struggle for greater freedom in raising capital and constructing and maintaining reserves. By 1934 a limited success had been achieved, but even so the aggregate amount contributed to the renewals funds in any year should not exceed $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the capital of the undertakers and the fund itself should not exceed 5 per cent. of the capital of the undertakers. Capital in this context was defined so as to include any share capital outstanding, premiums received on the issue thereof, and long-term borrowings secured on mortgages or by the issue of debenture stock.

Since nationalisation the industry has adopted the depreciation basis of accounting for fixed assets both in respect of the book value of vesting assets and the original cost of assets acquired since vesting day.

Owing to the impossibility of ascertaining the historic cost of the major assets in existence at vesting day it was decided to write off depreciation from the net book values of all assets using the straight line method and adopting a period based on an estimate of the remaining period of serviceability of these assets. In the case of the East Midlands Gas Board this period was deemed to be seventeen years and consequently a rate of 6 per cent. per annum was adopted, which would write off the vesting assets over the period by equal annual instalments. Rates of depreciation adopted by other Boards varied to some extent according to the state of the assets taken over, but the average rate for the country as a whole was a little under 5 per cent.²

In respect of capital expenditure since vesting day it was decided to adopt the historical cost basis of accounting and to apply the straight line method of depreciation, by which the original cost of the assets would be written

off to revenue by equal annual instalments over a period based on the estimated life of the assets concerned. The rates to be used were prescribed by a joint committee appointed by the Gas Council, which classified the assets into main groups on the basis of their estimated lives. In some cases the estimated lives were as short as ten years, while in others they were as long as sixty years. Depreciation was to be applied first in the year following the incidence of the expenditure.³ Since the estimated life of assets is considerably less than the prescribed periods for the redemption of stock, application of the above principles means that "the Boards make charges to revenue for depreciation and amortisation, substantially exceeding their contribution for redemption" (of British Gas Stock).⁴ The charge for depreciation is, therefore, deemed to include

- (a) provision for redemption of British Gas Stock,
- (b) provision for compensation to Local Authorities in respect of loans raised by them for the purpose of transferred undertakings, and
- (c) provision for the discharge of mortgage and other loans.

In so far as the depreciation charge is in respect of (b) and (c), cash payments of equivalent amount are made regularly by the Boards in reduction of the appropriate obligations. In so far as it is in respect of (a), cash contributions equivalent in amount should be made by each Area Board to the Gas Council annually, the total of which can be applied by the Gas Council in the purchase of British Gas Stock for cancellation. (Credit is extended to the individual Area Boards in the form of a reduction, by the amount of their contributions, of their proportion of the total liability for British Gas Stock.) Pending the application of these contributions to the redemption of stock, the Gas Council allows them to remain as temporary loans to the Area Boards.

In contrasting post-nationalisation procedure with pre-nationalisation procedure, it would appear that the industry has adopted a mixture of the ordinary commercial method and the municipal undertakings sinking fund technique. Thus the method of spreading historical cost over estimated working life has been adopted, but since the capital of the industry is all borrowed and must be redeemed over the prescribed periods, the sinking fund idea used by the municipal undertakings has been applied. There are, of course, differences. The loan period in respect of British Gas Stock is considerably longer than the life of the longest lived assets, so that the depreciation charge is deemed to cover provision for redemption of borrowings. Again the sinking fund notion is of the "non-accumulating" variety in that the annual contribution is arrived at by dividing the amount of the issue of British Gas Stock by the number of years in the prescribed period. Finally, the cash appropriations are not invested in securities outside the industry, but are used as working capital on loan from the Gas Council until such time as the Council requires them for the purpose of redeeming British Gas Stock.

As compared with the ordinary limited liability company which derives the bulk of its externally raised capital from issues of different kinds of shares and by borrowing on the security of debentures, the nationalised gas industry raises all its capital from outside sources by the issue of redeemable stock. But then, the ordinary limited liability company generates a considerable

amount of additional capital out of its own profit making activities, and by distributing as dividend less than the full amount of the available profits as shown by the audited accounts. The reserves so built up and the resources represented thereby are available to finance expansion and development. Indeed an adequate profit margin has been justified by Lord Chandos on the ground that retained profits are becoming increasingly important as a source of new finance for industrial companies in the new industrial era.⁸ The Area Boards and the Gas Council are, however, required by Statute to create and maintain general reserves. Thus by the Gas Act, 1948 (S.47), "each Area Board and, if and so long as they exercise their powers to manufacture plant, gas fittings and coke fittings, the Gas Council, shall establish and maintain a general reserve fund for the purposes of the Area Board or Gas Council as the case may be." It is not to be a central reserve fund to which Area Boards are required to make contributions. In this category too would fall the replacement and obsolescence reserves that the Boards maintain and the unappropriated balance on net revenue accounts. Finally capital profits like those arising from the purchase or redemption of British Gas Stock on favourable terms are small but useful contributions to capital resources.

The Central Guarantee Fund should be mentioned although it represents a limited drain on capital resources. The Gas Council is required by Section 46 of the Act to maintain this fund to assist any Board temporarily unable to discharge its capital obligations (interest payments, redemption contributions, etc.) or to refund to the Treasury any payment made by them for the purpose of fulfilling any guarantee given by them. Contributions to the fund can be used for the purposes stipulated only and, therefore, any contributions not for the time being required for these purposes must be invested in such securities of the Government of the United Kingdom or guaranteed by the Treasury as may be determined by the Gas Council with the approval of the Minister and the Treasury.⁹ Contributions to this fund by the Area Boards and the Gas Council are based on their responsibilities for British Gas Stock. The fund is not at any time to exceed five million pounds, and the aggregate annual contribution, including sums required to make good any payments out of the fund, from all the Boards and the Gas Council shall not exceed one million pounds in any financial year.

Finally the industry has been concerned to ensure that the resources made available are used to the best advantage—that resources surplus to requirements in one area should not be allowed to lie idle when they might be needed in some other area(s). To guard against this possibility, the Gas Council has worked out central banking arrangements with the majority of the Area Boards. Under these arrangements "the bank accounts of the participating Boards and the Council are linked to a central account and maintained daily at the levels of the aggregate cleared balances with the respective banks. When the cleared balances fall below or exceed the agreed levels they are automatically restored by transfers to or from the central account. All transfers are made in multiples of £5,000."¹⁰

⁸Cf. with treatment of redemption fund contributions not immediately required. At 31st March, 1957, contributions to the Central Guarantee Fund amounting to £2 million were invested in 2½ per cent. Savings Bonds 1964-67; British Electricity 3 per cent. Guaranteed Stock 1968-73; and 2½ per cent. Funding Stock 1956-61.

FINANCE OF THE GAS INDUSTRY

IMPLICATIONS OF METHOD OF FINANCING

The statutory obligations to redeem capital stock, to pay interest thereon while it is outstanding, and to maintain the Central Guarantee Fund as a cushion against temporary setbacks, coupled with the decision to operate proper depreciation policies, means heavy charges to revenue, and as the investment programme builds up so will these charges. It is important that the implications of these obligations on the revenue account and on pricing policy should be appreciated. Section 41 (1) of the Gas Act, 1948, states that "it shall be the duty of each Area Board so to exercise and perform its functions under the Act as to ensure that the revenues of the Board are not less than sufficient to meet their outgoings properly chargeable to revenue account taking one year with another; and if and so long as they exercise their powers to manufacture plant, gas fittings and coke fittings they shall so exercise those powers as to secure that the revenues arising from such exercise are not less than sufficient to meet their outgoings in respect thereof chargeable to revenue account taking one year with another." The tendency is to interpret this clause to mean that the industry should aim to break even, but a more correct interpretation is that the industry should "at least" break even.

It is the policy of the Area Boards and of the Gas Council to charge interest on borrowed money against revenue as soon as it begins to accrue and to charge depreciation in respect of capital expenditure first in the year following the incidence of the expenditure. Now it is axiomatic in accountancy that current income should be charged with the expense incurred in earning that

TABLE I

Annual Charges for Depreciation and Interest (In Terms of Gas Sold)

Year	Depreciation	Interest	Total	Pence per Therm of Gas Sold	Average Income per Therm of Gas Sold*	Col. (c) Expressed as a Percentage of Col. (d)
	(a)	(b)	(a + b)	(c)	(d)	
1949-50	£m. 9.0	£m. 7.7	£m. 16.7	Pence 1.86	Pence 12.55	% 14.82
1950-51	11.6	8.7	20.3	1.99	13.00	15.30
1951-52	12.6	10.1	22.7	2.15	14.09	15.26
1952-53	14.6	12.1	26.7	2.52	15.60	16.15
1953-54	16.6	13.3	29.9	2.85	16.25	17.54
1954-55	18.8	14.8	33.6	3.06	16.44	18.61
1955-56	21.2	17.1	38.3	3.47	17.71	19.59
1956-57	23.5	18.6	42.1	3.86	19.09	20.22

*Average income per therm of gas sold embodies in one figure the revenues from the different tariff structures of the twelve Area Boards.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

income and it is submitted that the above-mentioned method of treating capital costs in the gas industry runs counter to this axiom. Much of this capital expenditure is being incurred to provide increased capacity in the future. Thus current income is being asked to bear the costs of producing future income with consequent pressure upon costs and prices. The trend of these costs and the burden they represent per unit of gas produced is displayed in Tables I and II.

Since the sale of gas represents some 56 per cent. of the gross revenue only, this analysis can be carried a stage further by comparing the rate of growth of gross revenue with the rate of growth of these charges and to express these charges as a percentage of gross revenue as in the following table.

TABLE II
Annual Charges for Depreciation and Interest (In Terms of Gross Revenue)

Year	Gross Revenue	Rate of Annual Increase of Gross Revenue	Annual Interest and Depreciation	Rate of Annual Increase of Interest and Depreciation	Col. (c) Expressed as a Percentage of Col. (a)
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	
1949-50	£m. —	% —	£m. 16.7	% —	% —
1950-51	233.5	—	20.3	21.6	8.7
1951-52	261.0	11.8	22.7	11.8	8.6
1952-53	281.5	7.9	26.7	17.6	9.5
1953-54	297.4	5.6	29.9	10.7	10.1
1954-55	325.3	9.4	33.6	13.7	10.3
1955-56	346.1	6.4	38.3	12.3	11.1
1956-57	370.6	7.1	42.1	9.9	11.4

As the benefits from these investment and development programmes accrue one would anticipate a reduction of the burden of these fixed costs as they are spread over an increasing volume of output. The rate of growth of these charges should slow down,* while the rate of growth of revenue

*The programme of each Board provides for the installation of further gas manufacturing plant. A change of emphasis has, however, become apparent by comparison with the early years. Whereas in the past a race had to be run to overtake arrears of repairs and replacements and to keep up with increasing peak demand, in 1953-54 with rare exceptions unprecedented peaks were fully met; and in 1954-55 there was a long period of sustained high outputs during which reductions in pressure were very few. In these circumstances Boards are better placed for the phasing of their programmes of plant construction. Provision must be made for prospective increases in demand, but for most Boards the peak of capital investment in plant has been reached or will shortly be reached, and the capacity of production plant under construction is beginning to diminish (Gas Council, 6th Report and Accounts, p. 56).

should increase. These are the conditions which should give rise to a pricing policy aimed at "reducing so far as practicable the price of gas and coke." In addition to these costs imposed upon the industry partly by statute and regulation and partly as a matter of prudent policy, the industry has to cope with the inevitable rise in operating costs that follows from the inflationary conditions that have persisted since the war. The East Midlands Gas Board have attempted to build up an index based on 1949 prices to show the movement of operating costs over the years. The index of total operating costs at 31st March, 1956, taking May, 1949, as 100, stood at 165.

In relation to the financial problems of the gas industry it is important to distinguish carefully between the two groups of costs outlined above. The rise in operating costs can be brought under control if the anti-inflationary measures adopted by the Government are successful, but this is not the case in respect of the servicing and redemption charges of the capital borrowings. Such charges once incurred cannot thereafter be avoided, they are fixed costs. Furthermore, additional borrowings may have to bear even higher rates of interest* and may consequently add still further to the existing charges. It is possible, of course, to prevent further charges of this nature, by suspending temporarily any further development plans for which finance has not already been raised, though it is inconceivable that the industry itself should take such a decision. Capital development schemes involve a considerable degree of forward planning and once launched can only be stopped by incurring heavy losses. It has been rightly said that "capital expenditure can only be controlled before it is incurred."[†] Nevertheless a decision has been imposed by external conditions.[‡] In connection with this second group of what once incurred might be called "unavoidable costs" the industry must look to the fructification of its heavy investment policy since nationalisation to yield a greater volume of output over which to spread these costs. Any reduction in the investment programme and in the gas industry's share of it cannot, therefore, be looked upon with any degree of composure by the industry. The East Midlands Gas Board accepted the logic of this and has attempted to work out a policy to achieve an immediate higher income, and to enable more business to be transacted by the greater productive capacity coming forward in the near future.[‡]

*In inflationary conditions the relative burden of existing servicing charges is reduced; if interest rates rise new borrowings will be more costly in money terms. With deflation, existing charges become a relatively heavier burden, but to the extent to which they are possible this may be mitigated by conversion operations.

[†]Cf. Gas Council, 7th Report and Accounts, paras. 26 and 27, p. 5. In view of the country's economic position, the gas industry was asked to make a reduction in the capital expenditure programme for 1955-56 which had been approved by the Minister in the previous year. The capital programmes for 1956-57 have been re-examined in a similar light, and, after consultation between the Minister, the Gas Council and the Area Boards, a cut of some 12 per cent. has been made in the programme for that year. See also Gas Council Report and Accounts, 1956-57, paras. 20 and 21, pp. 4 and 5.

[‡]See East Midlands Gas Board, Report and Accounts, 1953-54, p. 21. The Board in December, 1953, decided upon a course of action which represented a completely new approach to the problem of meeting costs. They were strongly of the opinion that not only was a measure of stability in gas prices necessary as a firm basis for future development of the Board's business, but also that the best way of meeting rising costs was to secure such an extension of trading activities as would enable that part of their costs which are "fixed" to be spread over a greater number of therms sold. In this

To date the gas industry has been able to sell all that it is able to produce. Costs have been rising steadily in common with the general price level, and servicing charges in respect of capital borrowings have been increasing as a result both of this and the implementation of development plans. The obligation to "at least break even" taking one year with another must mean increasing pressure to raise prices since the possibilities of increasing saleable output are at present limited. The ability of the Area Boards to adjust prices is, then, of great importance.

The gas industry, like the other nationalised industries, does not enjoy unrestricted freedom to adjust their prices even to meet short run difficulties. Indeed the Ridley Committee (1945) took the view that "the determination of price structures should not be left entirely to the nationalised industries themselves," and recommended the "establishment of a specialised body to study existing and alternative pricing methods and advise the Minister on the price and tariff policies of the nationalised fuel industries. We recommend that the Minister should set up a small Tariff Advisory Committee of, say, five to seven independent members of suitable experience who would report to him . . . and whom he would invariably consult before approving major changes in tariff prices. The Tariff Advisory Committee should not only consider how far actual prices and tariffs charged by the fuel industries appropriately reflect these principles. It should consider and report in cases where there appeared to be a conflict in pricing between the attitude (or interests) of a particular Board and the wider national interest" (para. 265).

Moreover the Gas Act itself lays down that the method of charging for gas shall be in accordance with the number of therms supplied (i.e., the thermal system). The tariffs charged are to be fixed by each Area Board and shall show in addition to the prices charged the methods by which and the principles on which the charge has been calculated. The tariffs once fixed are to be given maximum publicity. Each Board is entitled to enter into special agreements with any customers where the tariffs in force are not appropriate owing to the existence of special circumstances, but no Area Board is to show undue preference to or exercise undue discrimination against any person or class of persons. The Act (S.9 (4)) also provided for the creation of Consultative Committees whose duties were to include, *inter alia*, "considering any matter affecting the supply of gas in the area, including variation of tariffs and the provision of new and improved services and facilities within the area, being a matter which is the subject of a representation made to them by consumers or other persons requiring supplies of gas in that area."

Finally, Section 1 (8) of the Act provides "subject to and in accordance with any directions given by the Minister . . . every Board shall reduce, so far as practicable, the price of gas and coke, and avoid undue preference in the supply of gas and coke."

way it was hoped to maintain the cost of gas sold at as near a constant level as possible in a period of mounting costs. It was realised that further rises in costs might make the full development of this policy difficult if not impossible. The Board decided to make price concessions to certain groups of consumers, with the immediate aim of building up gas sales in the most economical directions and to create an increased demand for gas in preparation for the comparatively near future when the maturing of their plans would make available substantially increased quantities of gas from the more economical sources of manufacture situated in the coalfield area.

FINANCE OF THE GAS INDUSTRY

This is not to say that price adjustments have not been made, but the matters referred to above emphasise that a procedure which is a domestic matter under private enterprise is made much more of a public concern under nationalisation. Even where price adjustments have been sought there has been inevitably some delay in their implementation with resulting difficulties for the Board concerned. Again it is open to question whether the price adjustments made have been adequate in view of the supply position and the financial requirements of the industry. The tendency to misinterpret the statutory obligation coupled with the difficulties of adjusting prices make it extremely difficult for the industry to do more than break even, and the surplus which private industry looks to for such a large part of its capital resources is far too narrow in the case of the gas industry to make much contribution towards expansion requirements. It may be that it is the intention of the Act that existing capacity only should be maintained out of earnings and that finance for development and expansion should be obtained from new borrowings, which in turn will be redeemable out of earnings. If so this is reminiscent of the attitude of the legislature to the old statutory companies.

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In attempting to deal with this problem the first thing that occurs is that the annual reporting appears to have suggested to the nationalised Boards that they must aim at least to break even each year, although a more accurate and reasonable interpretation would be to aim at least to break even over a period of years, i.e., temporary deficits are not of importance provided that over the agreed period of years surpluses and deficits at least cancel out.* This would at least give the Boards greater room in which to manoeuvre and plan. It is acknowledged that there is difficulty in determining the appropriate term of years over which the Boards should account, but this should not prove an insurmountable obstacle. Mr. Herbert Morrison suggested that the general organisation of these Boards might be examined, say, once every seven years, and this period might be adopted as the period of accountability too.

If this suggestion proves unattractive then the method of handling capital servicing charges might be examined. It has been shown that current revenue from existing capacity is being asked to bear capital costs in respect of the provision of future capacity. Acknowledging that this is not unusual in commercial enterprise where reserves built up out of earnings allow this procedure, it is unreasonable in the case of these Boards, which for various reasons have no reserves and cannot hope to build significant reserves while the interpretation of their function is merely to break even. It would appear then that some such procedure as the following is necessary. There would seem to be no logical objection to applying a recognised concession of company

*Cf. Mr. Gaitskell—Gas Bill Standing Committee D Report, Session 47-48, Vol. 2 col. 1145: "I would emphasise that I attach a good deal of importance to the principle, that normally we should expect Area Boards to cover their costs each year. Normally that should be the case, although we are not actually imposing that obligation on them legally and I will expect them to arrange their affairs accordingly." See also D. N. Chester—Price Policy Indicated by Nationalisation Acts—O.E.P., N.S. 2, 1950.

law to the interest on capital which has been expended on works which can only be made remunerative after a lengthened period of time. Thus Section 65 of the Companies Act, 1948, states that "where any shares of a company are issued for the purpose of raising money to defray the expenses of construction of any works or buildings or the provision of any plant which cannot be made profitable for a lengthened period, the company may pay interest on so much of that share capital as is for the time being paid up for the period and subject to the conditions and restrictions (mentioned), may charge such interest to capital as part of the cost of construction of the works or buildings or the provision of plant." It would not be difficult to read "capital" for "share capital" and to apply this principle to the gas industry. The interest charges would then be written off to revenue by means of depreciation charges. Alternatively the precedent set by the Transport (Railway Finance) Act, 1957, where a transfer is made to a special account set up by Statute to hold in suspense for subsequent amortisation the extra costs and deficits of the period of modernisation and reorganisation and development might be followed. This principle should be borne in mind in the event of any future sizeable development programme.

If these procedures prove unacceptable then it would seem that what is required is for the industry to be given greater freedom in fixing its prices so that it can not only cover all costs but budget for a reasonable margin out of which to build reserves.

¹P. D. Leake, *Depreciation and Wasting Assets*. 5th Edition, London, 1948.

²Gas Council, 2nd Report and Accounts, 1950-51, p. 36.

³Joint Committee on Rates of Depreciation for Post Vesting Assets. See Summary of Recommendations Appendix II, 2nd Report and Accounts of Gas Council, 1950-51.

⁴East Midlands Gas Board, 2nd Report and Accounts, Notes on Accounts, p. 38.

⁵*Review of the Year 1955*, A.E.I. Ltd.

⁶Gas Council, 3rd Report and Accounts, 1951-52, para. 42, p. 9.

⁷D. J. Young, C.A., F.C.W.A., Secretary and Comptroller—Steel Company of Wales Ltd. in an article "The Impact of Automation on Management Accounting"—*The Accountant*, 9th June, 1956, p. 649.

What I Expect from O. & M.

By DR. G. H. GIBSON

This paper is based on an address by the County Medical Officer of Health for Leicestershire to the Local Government O. & M. Officers' Group of the Royal Institute of Public Administration on the 15th November, 1957.

My first task must be to thank you for the honour you have done me in asking me to address you today. I regard it both as a compliment and as a responsibility. You will appreciate that what I have to say must be regarded as my own personal views, not necessarily those of my authority or of medical officers of health or chief officers generally. I cannot claim for my remarks any profound originality but hope that the point of view of the consumer may be useful.

You are, I am sure, well aware of the type of department I have to administer as Medical Officer of Health of a county of some 350,000 inhabitants, and of the training and experience, both medical and administrative, which I have received in the various posts I have held before obtaining my present appointment. I can make my views about O. & M. Officers clear at the outset: I welcome very much the help I receive provided certain conditions are satisfied. Under those conditions, which I shall now set out, I feel that resentment of the work of an O. & M. Officer must mean either that the head of the department is so conceited that he is sure he can be taught nothing, or so lacking in self-confidence that he is afraid to expose his department to the light of informed or constructive criticism.

First of all, the O. & M. Officer must have the right personality: this may seem a platitude but in this work it is all important. He must be genuinely knowledgeable and competent, capable of demonstrating that he really knows his job, tactful in handling people but ready to give a considered opinion however unpopular that opinion may be. He should have sufficient status, and should be on the staff of the Clerk's Department rather than the Treasurer's. I know that this is not a universally accepted view, but I have no hesitation in putting it forward. The Clerk is after all the chief officer of the authority, while an officer from his department does not carry the same implication of financial control and restriction as one from the Treasurer's, and I consider that the too ready association of O. & M. with financial saving (most desirable but not the only consideration) can be unfortunate.

An assignment in a department should first of all be discussed with the chief officer of that department: what form this discussion should take will depend on the particular problem under review. The O. & M. officer should inform the departmental head in general terms on the way in which he proposes to set about his task, and should thereafter have freedom to interview staff, scrutinize records, etc. In return for those facilities he must be constantly on his guard against causing trouble—however unintentionally—in the department during his investigations. This is fundamental: he may be interviewing staff labouring under a grievance, or apprehensive about the future, and an unfortunate remark may cause untold harm.

When he has completed his investigations, he should submit a written report to the head of department. This report should be a complete survey

of the department or section under review, which can be kept for future reference and should not only relate to suggested changes; it will form the basis of discussion between the two officers concerned. The report should be made to the head of the department, and not to any committee of the council, and the responsibility of implementing the recommendations, or of not doing so, should remain with the departmental head. It is natural that I myself should think on those lines, but I do not think that it is only by a process of rationalisation that I feel convinced that this is the best procedure for efficiency. The chief officer is responsible for the administration of his department, and that responsibility must not be taken from him. If the O. & M. Officer makes recommendations which require committee approval, and convinces the chief officer of their wisdom, then that chief officer must himself make the recommendations to his committee and if by any chance they do not work out as well as expected, he must accept the consequences and not lay the blame elsewhere. I think that it is unfair to expect the O. & M. Officer to carry any responsibility for the actual administration of the department and if he makes his report to a committee, then he is in fact assuming that responsibility.

Two problems constantly arise in this work. The first is, how far should the O. & M. Officer's survey and recommendations concern policy in addition to administration? The theoretical answer must, I think, be "not at all": but while this counsel of perfection may be easy to carry out in major issues, it is difficult, if not impossible, to disentangle administration from minor points of policy. The relationship between the two officers should be such that the O. & M. Officer should be able to comment on the administrative advantages that would accrue from some change in policy, in the full realisation that if such a change is not deemed desirable the matter ends there.

The other problem lies in the extent of the O. & M. Officer's duties in regard to professional or technical staff. It is readily appreciated that he is an expert in office routine, supplies, equipment and records, etc., but in a department such as a Health Department all "office" action exists for the sole purpose of supporting and controlling a small army of "field workers"—doctors, nurses, home helps, ambulance staff, and so forth. How far should he concern himself with those workers? Personally, so long as the conditions carried out above are concerned, I see no objection to asking or receiving advice on appropriate matters relating to the organisation of such staff. In this case trust and confidence between departmental head and O. & M. Officer is more essential than ever.

I might mention briefly some of the problems on which I have sought the advice of the O. & M. Officer. One related to the section of the office dealing with notifications of births and a number of other activities branching out from notification—immunisation, Health Visitors' records, etc. This section had had various additions made to its work, was showing some signs of strain and obviously needed overhaul. A survey was carried out which resulted in considerable streamlining of administration, including a simplified record system and the abolition of some unnecessary records. Another inquiry related to a department where I was concerned at what appeared to be heavy administrative "overheads" in relation to the field work carried out—always a matter of concern in a Health Department: here some useful

WHAT I EXPECT FROM O. & M.

suggestions were made while I was convinced that the administrative work was in fact necessary. A survey of one large and important section was of interest in that although some most helpful results were obtained, one major suggestion had to be disregarded as it ran counter to a very definite county council policy.

As a rule I have found no difficulty in accepting the great majority of recommendations, and it might be of some interest to classify the reasons which influenced me on the occasions when I felt I should reject them. Firstly, as mentioned above, there may be a question of policy. Secondly, there may be "technical" considerations related to field workers or the special needs of the department. Again, there may be considerations of personalities, for example, the qualities of two senior members of staff, while there is always the possibility of plain differences of opinion.

In what ways can an O. & M. Officer in a Local Authority assist a chief Officer? There is firstly his expert knowledge; secondly, he has the great advantage of the "new look," being in a position where he can see problems from a fresh and unbiased view-point. Then he has a knowledge of the work of other departments which can help him to improve co-operation and avoid duplication. Lastly (and perhaps of most importance) he is in a position to influence and educate the members of the staff whom he meets, including chief officers!

It has been suggested that I might offer some advice to a hypothetical O. & M. Officer about to start on his job. If he is going to fulfil all the criteria I have already laid down, he will be such a paragon that no advice would be required, but I might venture on the following.

- (i) He must always remember the necessity for the correct approach, desirable in any officer, but essential for "O. & M." Without it, an O. & M. Officer is probably a liability rather than an asset.
- (ii) He must realise that he cannot "equate" staff exactly. One need not condone inefficiency, but in the human world the best results are obtained if the varying capabilities and oddities of people are studied and considered.
- (iii) Departments differ, and tend to have a particular "atmosphere" and mode of work, created by the type of work done and the personalities of past and present senior officers. If the department in general is efficient, this "atmosphere" should be respected and preserved. Administration is a means to an end, not an end in itself.
- (iv) He must be very careful indeed before claiming that any of his suggestions will result in financial savings, and lose no opportunity of emphasising increased efficiency.

To sum up, I can say that my own experience of "O. & M." has been helpful to myself and to the efficiency of my department, and I have not found that it detracts from the powers and responsibilities which I must carry as a chief officer.

Human Sciences Committee

THE Council for Scientific and Industrial Research has decided to continue to promote research into the human problems of industry as an established part of its work. In a written answer to a Question in the House of Commons on 21st January, Mr. H. Nicholls, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Works, representing the Lord President of the Council, announced that the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research has set up a Committee on Human Sciences in Industry which will keep under review the development of the human sciences in relation to industrial needs and will advise the Research Council in the allocation of grants and on other means of promoting research in this field.

The Department's concern with the human sciences applied to industrial problems derives directly from the work of the former Committee on Industrial Productivity set up in 1947 by the Lord President of the Council and the Chancellor of the Exchequer as part of the post-war drive to increase the efficiency of British industry. It was felt that psychologists and related scientists had done useful work during the War, and that similar applications should be possible in peacetime industry. One of this Committee's Panels was on Human Factors, and this initiated research projects in industrial settings intended to add to knowledge, to train research workers, and to show industry the potentialities of such research.

The Committee came to an end in 1950 and in its final Report recommended that the Panel's work should be taken over and continued jointly by the two permanent research bodies, the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research and the Medical Research Council. After a comprehensive survey of current work in April, 1953, they set up two Joint Committees, on "Human Relations in Industry" and on "Individual Efficiency in Industry," which sponsored research in psychology and allied fields and fostered industrial awareness of such research and its applications. These Committees came to an end in 1957, agreement having been reached to replace them by separate committee structures reflecting the different interests of the two parent bodies. A substantial flow of results is now coming from the research projects which they sponsored, on subjects ranging from designing machine controls to fit the operator, to tensions between producer and inspector and how these depend both on formal organisation and the nature of the inspection, and to studies of the impact of technical change on the organisation and social structure of a firm and the surrounding community. The new Committee is expected to carry on and develop the D.S.I.R. side of the work of the two former Joint Committees, and it will also have certain interests in the field of operational research deriving from the former D.S.I.R. Committee on Economics and Industrial Operations.

In the U.S.A. these sciences are being increasingly applied to the study of the functioning of public bodies and their members, as well as to industry; an extension which has hardly begun in this country.

The Priestley Commission and Afterwards

ARTICLES appeared in the Summer and Autumn issues of 1956 of the *Journal* describing the recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Civil Service 1953-55 (commonly called the Priestley Commission after the Chairman of the Commission, Sir Raymond Priestley) and the negotiations on these recommendations.

The recommendations covered a wide field, including the principles which should govern pay in the civil service and the rates of pay of the main classes, hours of work, overtime and annual leave, and certain superannuation issues. Apart from the superannuation issues, which were discussed separately, the other recommendations were the subject of negotiations on the Civil Service National Whitley Council resulting in an agreement which, after reference to Staff Association Conferences, was ratified in June, 1956.

This article deals only with the Royal Commission's recommendations on the principles for fixing pay in the Civil Service, and the machinery to be used for that purpose, and describes how the machinery has worked in the period following the ratification of the agreement.

PRINCIPLES FOR FIXING PAY

In the absence, for the most part, of normal commercial considerations of profit and loss it has always been a matter of some difficulty to determine the principles upon which Civil Service pay should be based. The Priestley Commission recommended a formula which has become known as the Priestley formula of fair comparisons. This formula stems to a considerable extent from the formula previously used and known as the "Tomlin Formula" because it was recommended by the Royal Commission on the Civil Service 1929-31 under the Chairmanship of Lord Tomlin. The Tomlin Formula is too long to quote in full, but the key words in it are :

"We are satisfied that broad general comparisons between classes in the Service and outside occupations are possible and should be made. In effecting such comparisons the State should take a long view. Civil Service remuneration should reflect what may be described as the long-term trend, both in wage levels and in the economic condition of the country. We regard it as undesirable that the conditions of service of Civil Servants when under review should be related too closely to factors of a temporary or passing character."

What the Priestley Commission did was in effect to re-define the Tomlin Formula with considerably more precision and to go on to break fresh ground in the machinery which it recommended for applying its formula.

The Priestley Commission considered that the end to be served by principles of pay for the Civil Service was the maintenance of a Civil Service recognised as efficient and staffed by members whose remuneration and conditions of service were thought fair both by themselves and by the community they serve. To this end the Commission recommended that the primary principle of Civil Service pay should be fair comparison with the *current* remuneration of outside staffs employed on broadly *comparable* work taking account of differences in other conditions of service. There are two words in this fair

comparison formula of very special significance. They are the words "*current*" and "*comparable*."

The reference in the Tomlin Formula to "long-term trends" has led to considerable difficulty in Civil Service wage negotiations in the years between 1945 and 1953. The Priestley Commission's formula of fair comparison with "*current* remuneration" of outside staffs avoided these particular difficulties arising from the Tomlin reference to long-term trends. The reference to *comparable* work in the Priestley formula was also an improvement on the Tomlin formula of broad general comparisons in being more precise.

The Priestley Commission considered that this principle of fair comparisons ought to be generally acceptable, that it was fair to the taxpayer who has to foot the bill, since it ensured that he paid no more than a fair price for the service he got; it was fair to those who administer the Civil Service by securing, at least in the long term, the staff needed for the efficient discharge of their duties; and it was fair to the individual civil servant as a guarantee that his just deserts would not be sacrificed to political expediency or to uninformed criticism. The Commission recommended that such comparisons should be made with public, semi-public and private employment and for certain classes and grades with the universities, the teaching world and the professions. The rates to be used for these comparisons were to be the rates paid by what the Commission described as "good employers." The Commission defined "good employers" in this sense as not necessarily the employers who offer the highest rates of pay, but rather those who seek to provide stability and continuity of employment. Among other qualifications these good employers consult with representatives of their employees whether by formal or informal means upon changes that affect their remuneration or their conditions of work. Good employers in this sense also provide adequate facilities for training and advancement.

In making such comparisons the Commission recommended that account should be taken of differences in other conditions of service besides pay, such as hours and leave, pension rights, working conditions, sick leave, security of tenure on the one hand and freedom to change employment on the other.

As a secondary principle, but only as a secondary principle, to fair comparisons, the Commission recommended taking account of internal relativities. These are of two kinds, commonly called vertical and horizontal. Vertical relativities are those between grades in the same hierarchy. The Commission in its own pay recommendations clearly paid a fair amount of attention to these vertical relativities. Horizontal relativities are those between grades of comparable standing in terms of pay, but engaged on different work. The Commission did not pay great attention to these horizontal relativities and went out of its way to say that if the principle of fair comparisons involved the disturbance of previous horizontal relativities that was a perfectly proper and natural consequence of the fair comparisons principle and its consequences should be accepted even if they involved changes in the relative standing in terms of pay of the grades concerned.

As part of the general settlement on the Priestley recommendations the Official Side of the National Whitley Council accepted the principle of fair

THE PRIESTLEY COMMISSION AND AFTERWARDS

comparisons in full and without reservation. The Staff Side accepted it as a valid and valuable principle in the determination of Civil Service pay, but had certain reservations about its application in practice. These reservations have been placed on record, but up to the present at all events they have not given rise to serious practical difficulty.

MACHINERY

The Priestley Commission itself applied the principle of fair comparisons so far as it could in making its own recommendations for the pay of the main classes of civil servants. To enable the fair comparisons principle to be applied continuously it recommended a new piece of machinery, a fact-finding unit. It also made another novel recommendation for the setting up of an Advisory Committee to advise the Government on the pay of the Higher Civil Service.

Staff Negotiating Machinery

The implementing of the principle of fair comparisons is a matter in which the joint consultative machinery of the Civil Service is deeply concerned. This machinery is of two kinds: Whitley Councils (consisting of both Official and Staff Side representatives) and recognised Staff Associations, which negotiate directly with the Treasury or department concerned over the conditions of service of the staff which they represent. The National Whitley Council, which brings all non-industrial civil servants in the Home Civil Service within its ambit, has two main functions: one is to consider the general conditions of service of civil servants and the other to promote efficiency. The Official Side of the National Whitley Council is composed of senior officials of the Treasury and other departments. The Staff Side consists of representatives of Staff Associations. While the National Whitley Council can discuss general pay issues affecting all or most civil servants and on occasion has done so, it is more usual for pay issues to be discussed in relation to individual grades between the recognised Staff Association and the department concerned (i.e., the Treasury for grades employed throughout the service or the individual department for departmental grades employed only in that department). Both the National Whitley Council and recognised Staff Associations play their part in the machinery for fixing pay on the principles recommended by the Priestley Commission.

The Civil Service Pay Research Unit

The principle of fair comparisons as stated above was not entirely new and to some extent merely expressed in more precise terms what was previously known as the Tomlin Formula. The Tomlin Formula involved making broad general comparisons with outside remuneration for comparable work and such comparisons were regularly made as part of the normal negotiating procedure both by the Staff Associations and by the Treasury or other departments involved. Under the Tomlin Formula the negotiating parties did two things: they made broad general comparisons about outside remuneration and they conducted negotiations on the basis of those comparisons. The Priestley Commission criticised the existing methods of

making outside comparisons and negotiations about them on three grounds :

- (a) First, there was no co-operation between the two sides in finding the facts of outside comparisons. Each side found its own ;
- (b) Second, the information which the Official Side produced had often been obtained in confidence and had to be processed to preserve confidentiality before being given to the Staff Association. This led to a measure of suspicion on the part of Staff Associations. They felt that the dice were rather loaded against them, that the Treasury or the Department had more information than they had, and that there was at least a temptation for the Treasury or the Department concerned to suppress inconvenient information. The processing of the information to preserve its confidentiality made it difficult for the Staff Association to check on its relevance or its accuracy ;
- (c) Third, the enquiries were usually made by post, the comparisons were not normally based on actual investigation of the outside work, and it was often left to the outside employer to say how far his employees were comparable to civil servants.

In view of these objections about the previous procedure, the Priestley Commission recommended that the process of finding the facts about outside comparisons should be divorced from the procedure of negotiating about those facts. It therefore recommended that the first process, that of finding the facts, should be the task of an impartial body outside the Establishment divisions of the Treasury concerned with pay negotiations. This impartial fact-finding unit should collect facts about outside remuneration and provide these facts to the two sides as a basis for negotiation. The Priestley Commission considered it essential that means should be found of enabling the Staff Associations to participate fully in the work of fact finding. This recommendation of an impartial fact-finding unit was accepted and was part of the general Priestley Agreement.

The Priestley Agreement provided that a fact-finding organisation to be called the Civil Service Pay Research Unit should be set up, and should be under the general control and direction of the National Whitley Council. This general control is exercised through a Steering Committee composed of seven members from each side. Day-to-day control of the Unit is vested in a Director, of the grade of Under-Secretary, appointed by the Prime Minister. The Director is responsible to the Steering Committee for carrying out the programme of enquiry and observing the priorities laid down by it. The Director has a staff of investigators now numbering 20 who are civil servants put on to that work, but owing allegiance for the time being to no particular department other than the Pay Research Unit itself. All the staff of the Unit have been selected with the agreement of the two sides of the National Whitley Council. The cost is borne by the Exchequer.

It was obvious from the start that the Unit's programme of fact finding and its priorities would have to be determined. The Steering Committee decided that as the Priestley Commission had not been able to deal with the pay of most of the manipulative and engineering grades in the Post Office, the Unit should have as its first task the investigation of facts about outside

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comparisons for those grades. The Committee has similarly determined other priorities or made overall allocations of staff from time to time. Any recognised staff association and any Government Department has the right to ask that there should be a factual investigation in respect of a grade or class with which it is concerned. The Committee's consent is necessary before the Pay Research Unit can be put into action to ascertain and report the facts about outside fair comparisons for any Civil Service grade, but subject to the overriding priorities already mentioned the Committee has not sought to stop investigations from taking place.

Fact finding as defined by the Priestley Commission involves two processes :

- (i) establishing job comparability, due allowance being made for differences in grading structure, and
- (ii) the discovery of the pay and conditions of service that attach to outside jobs regarded as comparable.

The Unit is expected to say what differences there are between work inside and outside the Service, but is specifically precluded from any attempt to quantify those differences in terms of money since that is one of the questions left over for the negotiators. Once the Steering Committee has agreed to an investigation being made, the Staff Association and the department concerned have therefore got together in an attempt to agree both what work inside the Service is representative of the work of the grade, and what work outside the Service should be compared with it. There is usually much common ground, but each side may have additions made to the common list of outside comparisons. The Director of the Unit also has the right to suggest fields of comparison outside the Service, but these are not looked at unless one or both of the negotiating parties agree to them. Hitherto, in view of the time factor the Director has often had to ask that the list of outside comparisons which the parties want looked at should be curtailed. It may be that the work inside the Service is simple in character and can easily be compared with work outside the Service. But more often the members of a particular grade inside the Civil Service perform a variety of duties, either simultaneously or at different times, and there is no outside occupation where all those duties are performed by the same people. The association and the department, in consultation with the Director of the Unit, have in such cases agreed that the work inside the Civil Service should be broken down into its main categories and that the Unit should report on the remuneration of people doing as nearly as possible the same categories of work outside. The research officers of the Unit then spend some time investigating the work of the grade in the department or sections of departments where the parties consider that representative work of the grade can be found. The departments concerned may, if necessary, be asked to produce descriptions of that work which are supplied to the investigating officers. Investigating officers also study other material on the work of the Civil Service grade, such as statements of the two sides in arbitration cases, and the agreed factual material supplied to the Priestley Commission.

If the work of the Civil Service grade is technical or professional in character, the Investigating Staff have the assistance of technical or professional advisers, wherever possible acceptable to both the negotiating

parties. These advisers are fully associated with the work and with the preparation of the report.

Having got into their minds a fairly clear idea of the work inside the Service, the investigating officers then go to the outside employments which have been agreed upon as the fields of comparison. The job of finding the facts and still more of making the comparisons involves actually paying visits to the outside organisations where the work is to be found. This is something which can, of course, only be done with the co-operation of employers outside the Civil Service. That co-operation has been generously given and the Unit has not so far found serious difficulty in getting access to work considered to be comparable in outside employment. In the first annual report* of the Unit, the Director, in acknowledging this co-operation of outside employers, said that in the first year officers of the Unit had visited some 190 different firms and organisations.

Many employers have, however, followed the normal practice in industry, and insisted that the information obtained about their staffs should be treated in confidence. The information has, therefore, had to be processed to preserve that confidence and accordingly appears in the report as the work done in, say, Insurance Company A, and not in a named Insurance Company. At least two, and, if necessary, more investigating officers are employed on any one investigation. They make their visits singly, but the employment of at least two of them ensures that when their reports on their visits are collated and consolidated there is more than one point of view on the vital comparisons between jobs outside and jobs inside the Civil Service. The Unit then produces a report which sets out the work and remuneration and other conditions of service of the people outside the Service and makes a comparison of that work with the work inside the Service. Depending on the size of the field to be covered, such investigations have taken anything from three to six months from the start of the investigation to the production of the report. The report concludes the fact-finding stage. Negotiation, which is a quite separate process, follows.

NEGOTIATION

The Unit's report is confidential to the two negotiating parties, namely, the department and the recognised staff association, and is not divulged outside the circle of those parties. How the parties actually negotiate on any particular report is therefore a matter confidential to themselves, but the general outline of what they do with the report can be given at all events from the Official Side point of view. It involves three initial stages:

- (a) The first is the determination of the relevant outside analogues.
 - (b) The second is the calculation of what the Priestley Commission called "true money rates" for those analogues.
 - (c) The third is the statistical weighting to be given to those analogues.
- Each of these stages is a matter for negotiation between the parties.

Analogues

The first and most important thing to establish is how far the work outside the Service is comparable with that inside the Service. Here the Unit's

*Civil Service Pay Research Unit First Annual Report, 1957. H.M.S.O., 1s. 3d.

report on differences between the Civil Service and outside jobs is of great value. The Unit's opinion on whether the work outside is more or less or equally responsible as compared with the work inside the Civil Service naturally carries great weight. The determination of the relevant analogues is, of course, a subject on which opinions may differ as between the department and the recognised staff association.

True Money Rates

The Unit's report contains information about the pay of these outside analogues. The Priestley Commission considered that this information should be adjusted in the light of differences in conditions of service to produce what it called true money rates. Some differences in conditions inside and outside the Service can be quantified, and a figure put on them. For example, merit awards, if they are general, long-service awards, and meal vouchers can be assessed. It is usual for pension schemes outside the Civil Service to be contributory, whereas Civil Service pensions are non-contributory and one can deduct the normal pension contribution paid by the employee in calculating a true money rate paid outside. Similarly, differences in hours of work can be quantified. A rate paid outside for, say, 40 hours net work a week, i.e., exclusive of meal intervals, has to be adjusted for comparison with the Civil Service working week of 39 hours net outside London. All these adjustments can be made with some precision to produce true money rates, though the process is naturally one that gives scope for discussion and forms part of the negotiations.

There are other differences in conditions which cannot so easily be quantified such as differences in career prospects, sick leave arrangements, security of tenure on the one hand, freedom to leave the job without loss of pension rights on the other, cheap banking facilities, house purchase facilities, educational assistance and scholarships, travel concessions, discounts on purchases or on insurance premiums, and so on. Such unquantifiable differences are left, as the Priestley Commission thought they must be, to be taken into account in a general way in the negotiating process.

Weighting of Analogues

The third process is the statistical weighting of the true money rates paid to outside analogues. It is clear that a rate paid to, say, 5,000 people is statistically more significant than a rate paid to, say, 1,000 people. Since the Unit's investigations are necessarily made on a sampling basis, there are difficulties in saying how far the findings can be regarded as typical or representative. The Unit's reports give what help they can in this matter, and in particular provide any available statistics about the size and distribution of relevant occupational categories so that the possibility of projecting the Unit's findings about comparable work can be considered against a factual background.

Medians

These three processes of determining analogues, calculating their true money rates, and their statistical weighting provide the material for the determination of the median rate on which the Civil Service rate is to be based.

The Priestley Commission said :

" If it were possible to obtain for any specific job a set of rates ' representative of the community as a whole ' which could be arranged in order from top to bottom and with no complications . . . the Civil Service rate should be not lower than the median, but not above the upper quartile."

" In practice, however " (the Commission continued), " the field of selection will rarely, if ever, be representative of the community as a whole since we have proposed that it should consist of good employers. This, so far as it goes, leads us to suggest that the right range within which to make comparisons should be around the median."

The Commission observed that there was room for doubt about some of the stages of the calculations and about the allowances to be made for differences in other conditions of employment, and went on to say :

" We think that the Civil Service rate should be given the benefit of any such doubt so that in practice the Civil Service adjusted rate will tend to lie above rather than below the median of the outside true money rate."

The Commission's recommendation was thus, in effect, that the Civil Service rate should be in theory between the median and upper quartile rates of *all* outside employers, and in practice above rather than below the *median* of the rates paid by good employers outside.

The median rate is the rate at which half the people involved get more and half get less. The upper quartile is the rate at which a quarter get more and three-quarters get less.

The determination of the median of rates paid by good employers naturally depends in a measure on the assumptions made about the material provided in the Unit's report. But in general the report does, in the result, provide a fairly narrow range within which negotiations can take place. If necessary, the calculations can be made at different points in a pay scale and can take account of juvenile as well as adult rates. The normal procedure of pay negotiation can then proceed and the parties can either reach an agreement or in the last resort go to arbitration about the pay of any grade within the limits of compulsory arbitration.

THE UNIT'S FIRST REPORTS

Post Office Grades

It was agreed by the Steering Committee that the Post Office grades not covered by the Priestley Commission should have first priority in the examination of their cases by the Pay Research Unit. The Post Office and the Staff Associations concerned agreed that the Unit should look first of all at certain key grades so that settlements could be made not only for those key grades but also on an interim basis for other grades related to them, pending further investigations by the Unit in respect of those other grades.

In the Post Office rank and file manipulative hierarchy it was agreed that the first investigation should be into the key grade of postal and telegraph officers and the next into the key grade of postman. Reports on these two grades were in fact the first two produced by the Unit.

Postal and Telegraph Officers

Postal and telegraph officers, who number 22,000, are employed in Crown Post Offices. The grade does not include what are known as scale paid postmasters, who are generally local tradespeople doing Post Office work in addition to their normal business on salaries fixed in accordance with the volume of business. The postal and telegraph officers' work falls into two broad categories: the counter work dealing with the public over licences, money orders, telegrams, stamps, parcels, and so on, and the writing work, which forms 40 per cent. of the total work of the grade and is comparable to clerical work done in the normal outside office. The Pay Research Unit's report on postal and telegraph officers set the pattern for subsequent reports. It runs to over 300 pages of single spaced foolscap typing. It begins with an introductory chapter setting out the method of investigation already described. There follow chapters each of which is devoted to one of the fields of comparison with the postal and telegraph officer. These fields include clerical work and counter work in banking, British Railways, Civil Air Transport, Co-operative Wholesale Society, Electricity Supply, Gas Supply, Insurance, Local Government, retail distribution, and in some companies which co-operate with the Office Management Association in the production of its biennial clerical salaries analysis. Each of these comparison chapters includes an account of the work and of the pay and conditions of service of the outside occupation and a comparison of that work with the writing and counter work of the postal and telegraph officers on the basis of common factors such as judgment, accuracy, degree of supervision, etc. This raw material provided the basis on which the Post Office and the Union of Post Office Workers subsequently conducted their negotiations. The material required a great deal of analysing by both sides in the manner already described. One factor which was very much in the minds of the parties was that the work of the postal and telegraph officers in the Post Office had hitherto been regarded as qualifying for a lower maximum pay than that of the Clerical Officer in the Civil Service. The outside evidence showed broadly speaking that counter work such as is done by post and telegraph officers is generally given remuneration no less favourable than is paid for pure clerical work. The result of the negotiation was to raise the maximum pay of the post and telegraph officer from a London rate of £621 per annum to a London rate of £690 per annum.

Postmen

The other key grade was that of postmen, who number 90,000. Here the major difficulty was that there is no precisely similar work performed outside the Post Office since the Post Office has the monopoly of the postal service though not of the parcel service. There have, however, been efforts made in the past to compare the job of the postman in responsibility with certain other jobs in outside occupations and these formed the basis on which the negotiating parties suggested fields of comparison. These fields of comparison included gas meter readers and collectors, electricity meter readers and collectors, bank messengers, roundsmen employed by Co-operative Societies, and by retail firms, bus conductors employed by London Transport, the

Metropolitan Police, the parcels and goods handling staff, the motor drivers and the messengers on British Railways, and finally the railway police. The report, which ran to over 150 pages, was drawn up on the same general pattern as that for postal and telegraph officers. It began with an analysis of the work of postman which falls into two broad parts, namely, sorting work and delivery. The outside comparisons in the nature of things could not be so exact as they were in respect of postal and telegraph officer work. For example, there is no direct functional comparison between the work of, say, meter readers and collectors and the sorting work of postmen, but comparisons can be made between the delivery work of postmen and the work of meter readers and collectors in respect of physical demands, mental demands and responsibility. There are similar comparisons possible in respect of the other occupations.

This report again formed the raw material on which the negotiating parties worked and eventually reached a settlement in which the maximum pay of postmen was raised from £9 4s. 6d. to £10 3s. a week in London rates.

Other Manipulative Grades

Subsequent to the settlement for the key grades of postal and telegraph officers and postmen, interim settlements were made in respect of postmen higher grade, telephonists, telegraphists, overseas telegraph operators, and certain other manipulative grades pending fuller investigation by the Pay Research Unit.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF FACT FINDING

The major advantage of this machinery for fact finding by the Pay Research Unit is that it provides the negotiating parties with material which is trusted by both sides as being the finding of an impartial investigating body, and on this material they can conduct their subsequent negotiations. The result of these negotiations can be justified to public opinion as being based on the principle of fair comparisons with outside employment. In proposing increased postal charges some months ago the Postmaster-General said that they were necessary to meet a larger wages bill, and the wages bill had increased because fact finding had shown that on the basis of fair comparisons some Post Office grades were underpaid.

The difficulties involved in fact finding are largely practical ones.

It will be clear that the process of finding the facts is not a simple one, nor is the subsequent process of negotiating upon these facts. A report takes 3-6 months to produce. Negotiations may take a further 3 months or more.

A report of the Unit does not in itself determine the pay of any Civil Service grade. The negotiators have a quite separate and distinct role to play. But the report does indicate within a fairly narrow range what the appropriate rates of pay ought to be.

There are a very large number of grades, over 1,400 in the Civil Service, and it will clearly be a very long time before the Pay Research Unit is able to investigate all of them if it can ever do so. Investigations must proceed as they have done hitherto on a selective basis and probably be confined at least for the time being to key grades or to grades whose pay has caused very special difficulty.

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It is possible that some grades may not be suitable for fact finding, for example, some supervisory grades, at all events above the first line supervisor. The supervisory structure of the Civil Service is seldom, if ever, to be found repeated outside. In such cases it may well be necessary to determine the pay of key grades in a hierarchy at convenient levels and to arrive at the pay of other grades by a process of interpolation.

THE COLERAINE COMMITTEE

The other piece of machinery recommended by the Priestley Commission was the Advisory Committee on the Pay of the Higher Civil Service, usually called the Coleraine Committee, from the name of its Chairman, Lord Coleraine. The function of the Coleraine Committee is to exercise a general supervision over the remuneration of the Higher Civil Service. The Priestley Commission devoted a chapter of the report to the subject of the Higher Civil Service, which it defined as the grades of Assistant Secretary or equivalent and above. The Priestley Commission considered that the fixing of the remuneration of the Higher Civil Service presented special problems for three main reasons :

- (a) First, fair comparisons are more difficult (though not impossible) and the facts about outside remuneration at comparable levels are harder to get.
- (b) Second, the civil servants who advise Ministers are embarrassed if asked to advise on their own remuneration.
- (c) Third, grades in the Higher Civil Service have no right to compulsory arbitration.

The Commission did not favour the extension of compulsory arbitration to the Higher Civil Service, but recommended that there should be a Standing Advisory Committee to exercise a general oversight over the remuneration of the Higher Civil Service. This Committee could act on its own motion or could give advice at the request of the Government. Staff associations would not have access to it, though they might ask the Treasury to refer questions to it.

This recommendation was accepted and the Committee, under the Chairmanship of Lord Coleraine, was set up. The other members are Sir Alexander Carr Saunders, Sir Geoffrey Crowther, Sir Alexander Fleck, Sir Oliver Franks and Lord Latham.

The Committee has a Secretary from the Cabinet Office and determines its own procedure. So far two references have been made to this Committee.

When the Priestley rates of pay came to be implemented in 1956, there had been a general movement in outside salaries. The rates recommended by the Commission were those it considered appropriate in the middle of 1955. By 1956, when the discussions were concluded, there had been a general movement in outside salaries. It was part of the general Priestley agreement that the salaries recommended by the Priestley Commission up to and including the level of Principal in the Administrative class should be increased by $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. The Priestley Commission said such general settlements should not be extended to the Higher Civil Service, but reported to the Committee. This increase was not therefore applied to the Higher

Civil Service, but the Higher Civil Service Pay Advisory Committee was informed of the general 5½ per cent. settlement and asked to advise what, if anything, should be done for the Higher Civil Service in consequence. The reference was made in the form of a factual memorandum agreed by both sides. The Committee then asked each side for a written *ex-parte* statement of any proposals it wished to make. These statements were put in simultaneously and each side was given an opportunity to comment on the other's proposals. The Committee then made its recommendations. These were that the increase of £100 given just below the Higher Civil Service at the level of the Principals' maximum should be applied to the Higher Civil Service up to but excluding salaries of £2,850, and from £2,850 to £3,450 there should be an increase of £150, followed by a tapering arrangement so that salaries of £3,500 became £3,600. This recommendation was accepted and put into effect.

There was another general settlement for the rest of the Civil Service in the middle of 1957 when salaries were raised by 5 per cent. following outside movements of that order. This general settlement was not applied to the Higher Civil Service, but had to be reported to the Higher Civil Service Pay Advisory Committee in accordance with the terms of the Priestley Report. The Staff Side of the National Whitley Council, however, considered that the Committee should also be asked to undertake a general review of the remuneration of the Higher Civil Service. The Official Side did not agree, but agreed to forward to the Committee the correspondence between the two sides on the subject of such a general review.

The reference to the Committee on this occasion consisted of an agreed factual memorandum setting out the general settlement reached for the rest of the Civil Service and copies of the correspondence exchanged about a general review of the pay of the Higher Civil Service. The Committee then asked each side, as before, for an *ex-parte* written statement of its proposals. These statements were exchanged, and each side was then given an oral hearing. The outcome of this reference is still awaited.

The Priestley Commission also said that if there was disagreement on a claim in respect of an individual grade in the Higher Civil Service, the Association representing the grade could ask the Treasury to refer the claim to the Committee where a major issue was involved and the Treasury should accept an obligation to make such a reference. If the issue involved was minor, there should be a greater disposition on the part of the Treasury to agree to arbitration. The Committee might on occasion be asked to say whether an issue was a major or a minor one. So far no claim in respect of an individual grade in the Higher Civil Service has been put to the Committee.

CONCLUSION

The Priestley principle of fair comparisons provides a basis for fixing Civil Service pay which can be defended as fair both to public opinion and to civil servants. There are practical difficulties about the application of the principle, but these have so far been overcome, largely because both sides have tackled them in a spirit of goodwill.

Correspondence

ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNALS AND INQUIRIES

Questions of Fact

MR. G. P. WILSON, Solicitor to the Midlands Electricity Board, writes :—

I cannot understand why Mr. Marshall has succumbed to the luxury of a generalisation which seems irrelevant to his article : I refer to the statement, in parenthesis (lines 9 and 10 from the foot of page 353 of the Winter issue), "but when lawyers talk about questions of fact they usually mean what a layman would call matters of opinion" : but as a practising lawyer over more than 20 years I am quite satisfied, at any rate when I am talking to lawyers, that we usually agree on what are questions of fact and what are matters of opinion and I would not have thought that the class of layman who could reasonably be expected to take an intelligent part in discussions of that kind would themselves have been in any doubt. It may well be that in order to decide what is a question of fact matters of opinion may have to be considered : but in my view that does not in the least affect the sharp definition between the two things. For example, the question might be how long it took Mr. Marshall to write his article : that I would regard as a question of fact. It might then be argued that one must define the question : is it to be limited to the physical act of writing, or is it to include the time taken up in research? And if research is to be taken into account should time taken on research undertaken primarily in respect of other work be included? What elements have to be taken into consideration in arriving at the time it took to write the article may be matters of opinion but I would have thought that the answer is a question of fact.

Suppose a man is accused of murder and it is established that the deceased was stabbed with a knife known to belong to the accused. Are not those questions of fact even to a layman? Supposing expert evidence is given that death took place at a certain time: that I would have thought is a matter of mixed fact and opinion, the evidence being based upon certain facts, condition of the corpse, etc.

The opinion that the parenthesis is to be resisted is borne out by the fact of this one.

Reply by MR. GEOFFREY MARSHALL.

This was a semi-serious generalisation. I would not be so rash as to deny that lawyers (and other people) have for normal evidential purposes adequate common-sense distinctions between facts and opinions. My point was that one important sense given to "questions of fact" in legal usage does not correspond to the sense in which it is frequently used in ordinary language. All unsupported generalisations are perhaps luxuries but I do not feel that this one, if true, is irrelevant.

The Franks Committee Report and Minutes of Evidence make a number of references to questions of fact, e.g.,

(1) There should be an appeal on *fact*, law and merits from a tribunal of first instance (Recommendation 25).

(2) Reports should be divided into two parts—*findings of fact and inferences of fact* on the one hand, and *reasoning from facts*, including application of policy and recommendations on the other (Recommendation 80).

(3) In the definition of *factual evidence* . . . we include *expert opinion on matters of fact* but not expert assistance in the evaluation of technical evidence (para. 349).

(4) *Q.* 1843 (Mr. Justice Parker) . . . The question whether four, five, ten or twenty houses are unfit for habitation is a *pure question of fact*, is it not?

A. I would not have called it a very pure one. It could be looked on as a question of opinion—what standard you have got (Day 8, p. 258).

The divergence of usage is implicit in example (4). The departmental view urged in this answer was that the statutory criteria of unfitness were for slum clearance purposes "not wholly objective," (Day 8, p. 252) and ought therefore to be kept for ministerial application. The sense in which the existence of a "factual" question was denied was in line with the tendency of non-legal usage to restrict the concept "question of fact" to cases where the criteria leave no room for argument (looking-and-seeing, checking off, consulting reference books, etc.). But in legal usage "question of fact" may indicate not precision but an extreme vagueness in the criteria to be applied:—

"When a statute uses ordinary non-technical language describing a thing in general or ambulatory terms and it becomes merely a matter of impression or opinion whether in relation to the special circumstances a person or thing falls within the expression, the tendency of the law is to treat a finding upon the matter as a finding of fact." (*Reid v. Inland Revenue Commissioners*, 1926, S.C. 589, 596.)

This is precisely what a layman might contrast with "finding facts," and a "question of fact" in this sense does not set off a class of cases which can be contrasted with questions of "policy." A determination of a "factual" matter in the lawyer's sense may perhaps be decided by a Minister in a way which involves an element of discretion and is not factual in the ordinary sense. Determinations under the Housing Acts provide an example. In *In re Bainbridge* (1939) 1 K.B. 500, it was argued that certain buildings which the Minister had determined to be "houses" did not come within the scope of a compulsory purchase order made under the provisions of the Housing Act of 1936. The buildings in question consisted of ground floor shops with storage and living accommodation above. Upholding the Ministerial determination, Charles J., said (citing Swift J.), "Whether it is, or whether it is not a dwelling house seems to me to be entirely a question of fact." It would not be absurd for an intelligent layman to retort, "No it doesn't. It seems to be a matter of opinion." If the Minister had determined that (say) a swimming bath was a dwelling-house, a question of law as to whether any evidence at all existed to found the decision would have arisen but within these limits the determination may clearly be influenced by a policy standard. The wider the statutory term, the more room for policy and opinion. "Unfit for habitation" is wider than "dwelling-house" and "public interest"

(as used, for example, in the Restrictive Trade Practices Act) is wider still, but each may raise, in the legal sense, questions of fact. Non-legal usage does not, of course, have to distinguish factual questions from questions of law, but it is precisely the necessity to accommodate this distinction which gives legal usage the sense of "question of fact" which is not only not matched by, but goes directly contrary to, ordinary usage.

Perhaps also the extent of legal unanimity is susceptible of exaggeration. It may be recalled, in another context, that the Editor of the *Law Quarterly Review* once devoted a lengthy editorial paragraph to establishing the proposition that both the statements, "The Home Secretary has reasonable cause to believe" and "A. has a broken ankle" were statements not of fact but opinion (58 L.Q.R. 5). Lord Atkin in *Liversidge v. Anderson* (1942) A.C. 206, and Sir Carleton Allen (58 L.Q.R. 232) thought otherwise. And (in another branch of the law) whilst a false statement about an intention in a person's mind is not a misrepresentation of fact (*R. v. Dent*, 1955, 3 W.L.R. 297), "The state of a man's mind is as much a fact as the state of his digestion" (*Edgington v. Fitzmaurice* (1885) 29 Ch. 459, 483). There usually seems to be more than one opinion, even in law, about matters of fact.

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INSTITUTE NEWS

Lord Bridges, the Institute's New President

LORD BRIDGES, who was Permanent Secretary to the Treasury from 1945 to 1956, and Secretary to the Cabinet during the War years, has agreed to become the Institute's new President in succession to Viscount Waverley. Lord Bridges is the fifth President of the Institute, his predecessors having been, in addition to Viscount Waverley, Viscount Haldane, Sir Austen Chamberlain and Lord Stamp. Lord Bridges, who was the Guest of Honour at the Institute's recent Annual Dinner at the County Hall, London, expressed his admiration for the work of the Institute and his pride in having been invited to become President.

Retirement of Mr. A. J. C. Edwards

AT the recent Annual General Meeting, Mr. Edwards announced that he would be unable to stand for re-election as the Institute's Honorary Treasurer. He had occupied this office since 1938. He has been a member of the Executive Council since 1925, and in 1934 was elected its Chairman. He has attended the Institute's office regularly since his retirement from the Civil Service twelve years ago. In 1948-49, Mr. Edwards visited Australia, where he met a number of the Institute's Regional Groups. He later visited Canada and conveyed the Institute's greetings to the newly-formed Institute of Public Administration of Canada.

Last year, Mr. Edwards was elected an Honorary Life Member of the Institute. To mark the Institute's appreciation of his valuable work the Executive Council elected him a Vice-President and he was presented with an inscribed gold watch on behalf of the members.

Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Executive Council

MR. R. C. J. KENRICK has been elected Chairman of the Executive Council in succession to Mr. S. G. Williams.

Mr. Kenrick was the Institute's Honorary Secretary from 1945 to 1950 and for some months worked full time at the Institute's office. He played a most important part in reviving the work of the Institute after the War in very difficult circumstances. He has been a member of the Council since 1945 and, for the last two years, Chairman of the Programme Committee.

Mr. Abernethy, Deputy Comptroller of the London County Council, has been elected Vice-Chairman. He has been a member of the Executive Council since 1954 and has recently served as Chairman of the Research Committee.

New Whitehall Series

The Scottish Office, by Sir David Milne (reviewed on page 191), and the *Ministry of Pensions and National Insurance*, by Sir Geoffrey King, were

published in the New Whitehall Series earlier this year. Six books have now appeared in this series and it is hoped that the *Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation*, by Sir Gilmour Jenkins, and the *Ministry of Labour and National Service*, by Sir Godfrey Ince, will be published shortly.

Members can obtain *The Scottish Office* at the special members' rate of 16s. and *The Ministry of Pensions and National Insurance* for 14s. if they order from the Institute.

Haldane Essay Competition

THE adjudicators for the 1958 Competition will be Dr. R. M. Jackson, Reader in Public Law and Administration, St. John's College, Cambridge, and Dr. Norman Fisher, Principal of the National Coal Board Staff College. The usual awards of the Haldane Silver Medal and a prize of £50 for the best essay, and a second prize of £10, will be made, provided that essays of suitable quality are submitted. Further details and conditions of the competition can be obtained from Haldane House.

The winner of the 1957 Competition was Mr. R. J. S. Baker, Assistant Secretary at General Post Office Headquarters, for his essay on *Post Office Building Programmes*, which appears on page 125 of this issue, and the second prize was awarded to Mr. F. T. Lockwood, who works at the War Office, for his essay *Attitudes in Administration*.

New Honorary Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer

AT the Annual General Meeting, Mr. C. A. French was elected Honorary Treasurer in succession to Mr. Edwards.

Mr. French, who is Deputy Financial Adviser to the Electricity Council, has been the Honorary Assistant Treasurer since 1950. He has been with the Electricity Supply Industry since nationalisation and before that was Deputy Borough Treasurer of Smethwick.

Mr. W. H. Williams, Borough Treasurer of East Ham from 1943 until his retirement last year, was elected the Honorary Assistant Treasurer.

Additional Premises

THE continuing expansion of the Institute's activities has meant that the accommodation has become very cramped. The Executive Council sought larger office buildings, but was unable to find any suitable. As an interim measure the Council decided to house the Institute's library and Research Officers in the headquarters of the National Federation of Building Employers at 82 New Cavendish Street. The removal should be finished before the end of June.

The Two-hundredth Student

THE Institute's Courses for O & M Officers have proved both useful and popular. Mr. T. D. Hamilton, the newly-appointed O & M Officer on the staff of the South of Scotland Electricity Board, was the two hundredth O & M Officer to be enrolled. To mark this event, Mr. Kenrick, Chairman of the Executive Council, presented to Mr. Hamilton a copy of Brech's *Principles and Practice of Management*.

Conferences for Elected Members of Local Authorities

THE Institute's introduction of short study conferences on local government problems for elected members of local authorities has caused considerable interest. Three have been held so far—at Ipswich, Exeter and Ruislip in Middlesex. Local councillors seem pleased to have the opportunity of discussing local government problems informally and in a suitable atmosphere. Papers have been contributed by eminent people from local government. It has been found that, although members and chief officers of any one type of local authority meet on conferences, councillors rarely have the opportunity of discussing problems of common interest to district councils, boroughs and counties. It is hoped to repeat these ventures in Nottingham, Sussex and Cheshire within the next few months.

Mr. George Wray's New Appointment

Mr. George Wray, who has been Chairman of the Institute's Sussex Regional Group and a member of the Executive Council for a number of years, has been appointed Secretary of the South-Eastern Electricity Board. Mr. Wray has been Deputy Secretary since 1948, and had previously served at Carlisle and Guildford. During the last war he served as a Colonel, was awarded the O.B.E. and mentioned in dispatches.

Mr. Wray succeeds the late Mr. A. L. Burnell, who was also a very active supporter of the Institute.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Scottish Office

By SIR DAVID MILNE, K.C.B. George Allen and Unwin Ltd. Pp. 232. 21s.

WHAT is "the Scottish Office"? It is perhaps not surprising that, as Sir David says, there is still some misunderstanding in Scotland about this, for the connotation of the title has altered somewhat in the last thirty years. Before 1939 a large part of Scottish administration was carried out by administrative "Boards" acting with statutory powers, and the Scottish Office was the office in London where the Secretary for Scotland (since 1926 a Secretary of State) operated under powers conferred by Acts from 1885 onwards with a staff engaged partly in Parliamentary business, partly in work analogous to that of the Home Office, partly in miscellaneous, constitutional, legal and local government affairs, and partly in liaison work, including that sprouting from the operations of the Boards in Edinburgh. He was also Vice-President (in effect in complete control) of the Committee of the Privy Council responsible for the Scottish Education Department, whose office was in the same building.

In 1939, however, most of the Boards, and the Scottish Education Department, were abolished as independent authorities, their powers being transferred to the Secretary of State; and since then the Scottish Office has meant to the outside world in effect the whole body of troublesome people (I am not quoting Sir David!) who have to be consulted on questions of policy affecting Scotland.

The first move towards their new scheme of things was in fact made ten years earlier, when certain of the Boards were converted into "Departments," having the same powers but acting "under the control and direction of the S. of S." Naturally enough this book says little about that short-lived change; but it was not without interest as a step to give effect to the adverse view of Lord Haldane's Machinery of Government Committee on administrative Boards, while preserving to some extent the traditional authority of these Boards. The main objective was to bring the staffing of the Scottish departments more into line with Civil

Service practice; but it was of course open to the taunt that powers now appeared to be diffused over the whole personnel of a department from the permanent Secretary down to the charwomen!

As Sir Horace Wilson said in his review (*Public Administration*, Autumn, 1957) of "The Organisation of British Central Government, 1914-56," an important characteristic of the British Constitution is its flexibility, as well evidenced by the changes recorded in that book. Sir David Milne's comprehensive survey—all the more valuable because the Scottish Office did not figure in the first Whitehall series—gives further proof of this flexibility, notably, from the Scottish point of view, in procuring extension of powers to the Secretary of State for dealing with Scottish affairs and his fuller participation in matters of common concern to himself and other Ministers. "If this book has a theme," says Sir David, "it is perhaps one of constant adaptation to changing circumstances." It is of interest that the 1939 Act would enable the Secretary of State, if he so wished, to rearrange his departments. He could, for instance, without fresh legislation create a new department to handle all Highland affairs. But it is of no less interest to see that he has not found it necessary to make alterations even in spheres where alterations have been made in England and Wales. The impression one gets from the book is that the whole set-up in Scotland is a very well-knit organisation—and it can be added that the book is very well-knit too.

A study of the organisation and work of the existing Scottish departments, as here described with admirable clarity, should convince any reader of the rightness of the separate Scottish jurisdiction where it obtains—home affairs, health, education, fisheries, and the rest. Even in the case of agriculture, on which doubts have sometimes been expressed, it is evident that there are differences of law, practice and conditions which fully justify the

existence of a Scottish Department. Perhaps more could be said about the fundamental reasons for separate jurisdiction such as differences between English and Scottish law and the existence of separate bodies representing particular interests. But on the whole there is a wise avoidance of the temptation to concentrate too much on this approach.

That Scotland is not rigidly bound by prejudice or previous practice is illustrated by her readiness to switch over to English practice if it appears better, as, for example, in the case of the rating law.

A reviewer is perhaps expected to find something to criticise in a book. The only criticism I can make of this book is that sometimes the whole story about some current development of policy is not revealed; but this can hardly be avoided in dealing with a subject which at the moment is politically hot and not finally resolved. Inevitably the pace at which public policy develops must affect the permanence of the material in any book such as this, but that is no reason why it should be withheld.

One further point must be specially noted. In his capacity as Permanent Under-Secretary of State, Sir David Milne occupies a position which has probably no parallel in the British Public Service, namely that of being the chief officer of the permanent organisation without being head of any of the constituent departments. As the book brings out, there are clear advantages in this system in the special circumstances of Scotland, including in particular the fact that so much of the Ministers' work has to be done in London, while the day-to-day departmental administration is carried on in Edinburgh.

Apart from the obvious interest of this book both to students of the art (or science) of public administration and to all interested in Scottish affairs and in how they have been and are managed, it may be warmly commended to the general reader who can appreciate good writing spiced (as this is) with many humorous touches and as free as the context permits from the trammels of "officials" terminology.

PATRICK LAIRD

Education for Planning

By HARVEY S. PERLOFF. Johns Hopkins Press (London, Oxford University Press)
Pp. x+189. 28s.

THE University of Chicago's Planning Program brought together from 1947 to 1956 as high-powered a team of physical, rural and economic planners as are likely to be seen anywhere for a long time. In this book, Harvey Perloff traces some of the ideas that inspired and came out of that programme, plus his own conclusions from extensive planning experience in and out of the U.S.A. In a business-like and (thank heavens) brief style, addressed to his colleagues rather than the general reader, he shows first how the various strands of planning have appeared and woven together in American experience: planning in its local, regional, three-dimensional, economic, social, administrative and legal aspects. The resulting mix calls, Perloff thinks, not for one "ideal" planner, but for fifty-seven varieties, all, however, processed at one stage of their career in the same works and packed, so to speak, in the same tin. The local or regional planner (Perloff treats training for the two separately)

should start with a good undergraduate training of any relevant kind: architecture, economics, or whatever it may be. As a post-graduate he should take a "core" programme on the goals and problem-solving methods of local or regional planning: this programme would be common to all future planners whatever their speciality. Alongside the "core" each student should have a special field of concentration appropriate to his own previous training and interests. The final product would be a "generalist with a speciality," aware of the unity of planning and of what his colleagues are doing, yet also competent to speak on equal terms to his fellow engineers, sociologists, or lawyers outside the planning field. There is also, of course, Perloff agrees, room for lighter-weight planning courses for, for example, the future public administrator who wants to know what planning is about.

At the undergraduate level, Perloff is against the "bits and pieces" school

BOOK REVIEWS

which would train planners from the word go, on fragments from half a dozen disciplines: let a man have a solid education first, never mind what it is labelled. At the graduate level, he steers a razor's-edge path between the how-to-do-it concept of professional training and the rarefied atmosphere of B.Litts. and Ph.D.s. He is right. There is room for work of genuine graduate standard, leading to an M.A. or M.Sc. by examination, and differing both from straight professional training and from what one expects from a Ph.D. And this level of work is appropriate not only to the future planner but to the graduate manager or social worker: as indeed those who train personnel managers or social workers are coming to be well aware.

But can they make others aware of it? Could Perloff and his colleagues, even after ten years, sell their line in Chicago? They could not. In 1956, after several years of piecemeal-slicing of the budget at 5 per cent. per annum, the University of Chicago cut its Planning Program's throat. Judging both from Perloff's evidence and from what I know of other goings-on in Chicago around that time—for instance, the destruction of the

Committee on Industrial Relations—I should say that this was a combined victory of the how-to-do-it boys together with the old-line academics to whom anything remotely like professional training is hogwash. This ill-assorted combination is also well known in British universities. But Perloff, I am happy to see, is still trying. John Cornford said in that manual of administrative wisdom, the *Microcosmographia Academica*, that faculty caucuses are like mouse-traps: when you are outside you want to get in, when you are inside the mere sight of the other mice makes you want to get out. It is a great temptation, when you do at last get out—or, like Perloff, are thrown out—to follow Cornford's advice, turn your back on caucuses altogether, and go away into a quiet corner to write another book. Guilty, m'lud, guilty: I speak from a bad conscience. But Perloff is made of sterner stuff. I commend him heartily to anyone interested enough in education for planning, public administration, management, social service, or other such art-sciences (Perloff's term) to want to be stimulated, irritated, and generally made to think.

MICHAEL P. FOGARTY

The Social Order. An Introduction to Sociology

By ROBERT BIERSTEDT. McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, 1957. Pp. 577. 45s.

AMERICAN textbooks of sociology when read by an English audience for which they were never intended have come in for criticism on the grounds that they use a lot of words to establish the obvious, are pretentious, full of jargon and half-digested facts, and overstate the claims of the subject. A few books may deserve such strictures, for after all sociology is a new arrival in a country where the new is usually welcome, and in its rapid expansion has attracted many teachers and writers from the fringes of the academic world. This particular book is definitely not in this category; it brings to a complex subject clarity and a wealth of illustration from European and classical literature as well as from contemporary American society.

To understand the style and the presentation an image of the audience for which it is intended is essential. In the U.S.A. about 30 per cent. of the children

born in any year may arrive in classes where such a textbook is compulsory reading. Educationally the English equivalent, for whom the author is writing, is the middle or B stream of a secondary modern school during its first year in a university. Given the reading skills and word level and classroom time of this land of student, the task facing an author is formidable, and moreover he is subject to strong bureaucratic control by the experts of the publishing house. Professor Bierstedt, obviously an outstanding teacher, takes the slow pace of his readers as a challenge and has succeeded in telling the regulation textbook story in a way calculated to attract and stimulate them.

The first three of the five parts are principally concerned to clear away misconceptions about the nature of human society. They demonstrate that social processes cannot be explained in terms of weather, soil, or other external geographical

factors, as Montesquieu or H. T. Buckle tried to do; neither can biological or racial elements explain our rapidly changing social scene for these inherited characteristics can change only slowly; the search for causes can most profitably proceed within the realm called "culture," and part of this field of study is called sociology.

The core of the book is the 300 pages of Parts IV and V, where the terms used in modern sociology are introduced; society is seen as an arrangement of norms and statuses. Individuals, as personalities, appear in the analysis only indirectly. The important point is that society is not a collection of individuals, that would be a crowd or a statistical table, but an organisation of social groups in which positions are filled by people with common beliefs and practices. The "norms"—in America the word has none of the overtones of work that it has in Soviet society—are the expectations, or the rules and standards, that broadly govern conduct in social situations. The "stranger" in a peasant society, for example, has a status which demands courtesy and hospitality from the locals, but never intimacy. The behaviour of the individual who occupies a particular status, his role is an unimportant element in this book. To bring it in would lead the author into personality study or into individual psychology. He gives in effect, the mere anatomy of society, all the more interesting in its bare essentials since it lacks embellishments from biological human nature, or individual differences.

Norms and statuses are the building

blocks of societies; taken together they explain the structure of group life. In complex societies they combine into subtle combinations of doing things, or as we say into institutions, and into organised groups of people, or associations. In a cohesive society, with wide agreement on common objectives and a strong sense of its own identity, such simple analytical tools have a considerable usefulness. The United Kingdom, in spite of differences between the English, Scottish, Ulster and Welsh regions, is such a social unit. The U.S.A., on the other hand, seems to be a plural society; differences of ethnic origin, religion, social class, and colour complicate issues so that appeals to which all the citizens feel moved to respond are difficult to frame. The ways developed to study the intricacies of structure within this complex society should be particularly valuable to administrators who have responsibility for the control of the emerging nations in the Commonwealth.

Professor Bierstedt spells out the simplest words and concepts required for understanding such a developing social organisation, and as an introduction to social structure I can thoroughly recommend this book. He refers in the bibliography to each of his sixteen chapters to about 25 additional readings on each topic. These books provide the detail he cannot. In them will be found the considerable amount of proven fact and the not-to-be-despised propositions of tested theory that modern sociology has accumulated in the past thirty years.

JOHN MOGEY

British Pressure Groups. Their Role in Relation to the House of Commons

By J. D. STEWART. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. Pp. xii+273. 30s.

IN recent years the study of politics in Britain has become a much more scientific affair. Books on Political Theory and Practice have been supplemented by detailed and vivid analyses of what actually happens. The subject of Pressure Groups is exactly right for this kind of treatment, and is of great interest and importance. One opens Mr. Stewart's book, therefore, hoping to find it in the same tradition.

It is certainly a book compiled with great painstaking thoroughness. Mr. Stewart has sub-divided Pressure Groups into their natural categories. He has examined the process of consultation within Government Departments. He has surveyed the strategy of the Pressure Group and its policy of alliances and counter-attack. He takes us through the campaign and the Parliamentary activity that is generated. He assesses the value

of lobbying and public pressure upon M.P.s. Admittedly there are some curious omissions, of which the most obvious is the virtual neglect of the commercial television lobby. This, the most successful Pressure Group since the war, is dismissed in a couple of paragraphs.

But the really disappointing thing about it is that it never comes to life. It is not just that it is hard to read, but that it seems to miss the whole atmosphere of the Pressure Group. After all the men who work for them are men with grievances to be remedied and causes to be served. Similarly the M.P.s on whom they press their claims are also political activists, skilled in the art of campaigning. The interplay of these interests is exciting and should be made to seem so.

For example, what a pity that there is no perspective shown from the M.P.'s point of view: What of the interests that he has to serve? What about the Pressure Groups he acquires with his Party tag at the National level? What about the representation of local interests through his local party association? Can his constituents collectively get at him through

the local authority or in any other way? Have the Whips the power to override other pressures? To what extent do other M.P.s influence his judgment? To what extent is an M.P. equipped to get his point of view across to others?

One thing that emerges most clearly from reading Mr. Stewart's book is that the paid officials of the Pressure Groups have got infinitely better resources of assistance and money than has any Member of Parliament, with which to urge his view. Since so many of the activities of the Trade Associations and others are partly financed by tax reliefs, one wonders whether it is not time that Parliament should be strengthened to make it into a more effective Pressure Group in its own right.

Mr. Stewart's book would have been better if it had been on a larger canvas. The whole business of politics is the resolution of conflicting pressures and the reconciliation of different priorities. Lobbies and Pressure Groups can only be seen properly if they are close related to this continuing political process.

ANTHONY WEDGWOOD BENN

The Machinery of Local Government

By R. M. JACKSON. Macmillan, 1958. Pp. xii+360. 30s.

DR. JACKSON has written a general commentary on the English form of local government. He concentrates on the examination of problems rather than the explanation of what local authorities do. As a result there is no description of the powers of each type of authority. It is good to avoid excess of detail; yet in an introductory book of this considerable size cannot the tendency be carried too far? The reader will gain invaluable insight into the machinery of local government without obtaining a clear picture of what the apparatus is for. Lack of attention to functions also explains why there is no indication of how the tasks of local councils have been re-allocated since 1944.

Another gap occurs in the treatment of the associations of local authorities, which get little mention except in relation to proposals for structural reform. The sections on administrative control contain but one example of their intervention,

and this is about Magistrates' Courts Committees, bodies outside the field of local government. Other books share this fault. The C.C.A., the A.M.C. and their lesser kinsmen seem to get featured in the literature of pressure groups, not of local government. Yet the associations have now, for good or ill, largely established their right to encourage, advise and warn Departments on matters of policy that concern them: it is high time that this practice is everywhere recognised and understood.

There is some evidence that this work has been shaped to meet the needs of an overseas audience. The chapter on elections is unusual as it covers topics like proportional representation in showing how an elected assembly might be chosen. The following, penultimate chapter on dishonesty and corruption, and how we avoid them in English public life, is admirable, avoiding any taint of priggishness. An earlier section places emphasis

on the principle that appointments to the staffs of local authorities are made on the basis of merit and not of political affiliation. It is also stressed that senior local government officers—like senior civil servants—are silent on questions of political controversy. But are they? I can think of exceptions. In this matter the parallel with central government is not exact.

One or two minor slips can be found. The table on p. 280 shows that there are no county boroughs within the population bracket 30,000-50,000, yet the text below gives Burton-on-Trent a population of 48,890. The footnote on p. 224 is the

product of slack proof-reading. But, the book is excellent for first-year undergraduates and others studying the subject at an equivalent level. Dr. Jackson has a shrewd awareness of the politics of local government ("politics" in the non-party sense), and he is a lawyer with the interests of a sociologist. He produces lively prose concerned with ideas, written in a simple, lucid manner. Another important advantage of this work over others of a similar kind is that it is nearly up to date: and the character of the volume will cause it to date less easily than its rivals.

PETER G. RICHARDS

Leadership in Administration: A Sociological Interpretation

By PHILIP SELZNICK. Row, Peterson & Co., New York. Pp. xii+162. \$4.00.

THIS book is an example of the wisdom of the old adage that British and Americans are brother peoples divided only by a common language. It deals with familiar problems: it is quite short; it is able and original; it is not fundamentally obscure. But the average English reader will find it hard going: partly because American academic prose is in many respects more German than English in usage; partly because behind the book lie American experience and American research, and behind them in turn lie central European, not English, patterns of thought. It is hard to trace any British (or for that matter French) influence at all in the work of Professor Selznick, an extremely acute and learned scholar, concerned with matters of private and public government in which we think ourselves particularly experienced and adept. The English look very small indeed as seen from California.

Professor Selznick's problem is to say something important about the all-important question, what is the quality of a true leader, or a good leader: and to say it within the conceptual framework of social science. It is universally recognised that the men at the top in any organisation are effective (if they are effective) as individuals of unique quality: Sir Winston Churchill is the obvious British example, but everyone will think of other examples known personally—the late Sir Wilfred Freeman, for instance, at the Air Ministry and Ministry of Aircraft Production, in contrast with the

late Sir Arthur Street, a man of immense competence and devotion who failed in some respects because he lacked this quality. It is clear that such individuality passes from mouth to mouth and is recorded, in stories told out of school, in parodies, in epic poems, in the work of those historians (not by any means all) who go in search of it. But can one generalise about it, without being merely fatuous?

Most American administrative theorists (and this is perhaps the most intelligent branch of political theory in the U.S.A.) decline to do so. Some take the line that administration is not a special activity, or at least not one which can be discussed adequately except in close relation to discussion of all political and social activity in the small or great society concerned. Others derive administrative theory from the general notion of combined action conducive to a joint purpose, and therefore hold that important things can be said about administrative structure and efficiency, taking the purposes (or norms, or values) of the administration as given. First-class work has been done on both lines: but subject always to the old Marxian criticism (Groucho, not Karl), that it has "just left out the body of the letter." Their terms of reference exclude consideration of the special situation at the top, because either they treat the whole organisation as a unity, in which the man at the top is merely a specialised part (a functionary, not a leader), or they exclude the top as that which gives values

—a datum, not part of the argument.

The point of Professor Selznick's book is that he refuses to accept this situation, and attempts to talk in general terms about the difference between good leadership and mere adequacy, a decent showing in the top space of the organisation chart. He succeeds, in the sense that for those who understand the language, he presents a good argument and hangs interesting thoughts and examples on it. The present reviewer remains doubtful whether he has in the end solved the difficult conceptual problem (it is very similar to that tackled philosophically in Professor Dorothy Emmet's recent book on *Functions, Purpose and Powers*), but it would be most unwise to dismiss his argument in a brief review. This is an important book for those who like this sort of thing: and a good introduction to this sort of thing for those who do not know whether they can stand it or not.

Aspects of Justice

By SIR CARLETON KEMP ALLEN, Q.C. Stevens and Sons, 1958. Pp. ix+310. 25s.

At a time when so many influences are working to supplant the sense of justice with sentiment, or even sentimentality, one gladly takes up a book by Sir Carleton Allen on aspects of justice. In the first section we find a "grammar of justice" in which the subject is approached classically and historically. Yet there is nothing didactic about the author's "grammar": on the contrary, its great merit is that it is so thought-provoking. It analyses justice in a way which sets the reader re-examining his own ideas: there is no comfort here for those who are looking for a book merely to confirm their prejudices. As a whole, it is a skilful and impartial survey. Only in one matter, the element of retribution, does the learned author come down firmly on the sentimental side of the fence. He denounces Sir James Stephen for his "moral indignation" against criminals, and invokes Christian doctrine as the authority for the proposition that the idea of retribution is immoral. This oft-used argument recognises the teaching of Christian ethics, but conveniently ignores the fact that Christian eschatology is founded on the retributive principle. Not even Stephen advocated eternal torment as a reasonable form of punishment.

A final comment. Professor Selznick's most important research work has been about the T.V.A., a great American experiment in public enterprise, and about the form of organisation stamped on the Russian Communist Party by the personality of Lenin. If what he says in this book is true it is true of all human organisations everywhere: and plenty that fits his view is to be found in Dudintsev's famous novel about Russian bureaucracy, *Not By Bread Alone*, just as it is in *The Small Back Room*. It adds to one's sense of the strangeness of American ways that the publishers should present the book with a preface by a retired "businessman" hailing Professor Selznick as the discoverer of new reasons why the American way of life is unique and is the best of all.

W. J. M. MACKENZIE

The extent to which retribution is a proper element in justice perhaps calls for broader treatment than the learned author gives it. Here, as in some other places in the book, one regrets his undue modesty about discussing questions from the psychological angle, for his wisdom and experience so clearly fit him for the task. Although everyone with legal training tends to see justice as founded on reason, the popular sense of justice is at root emotional, and perhaps the aim of the law is best described as seeking to control, rather than to replace, emotion by reason.

Sir Carleton Allen strikes very near the truth when he writes (p. 24) "I cannot help feeling that in a great deal of what passes as moral indignation at crime . . . there is an instinctive self-regarding instinct of fear." This must be specially true in relation to crimes of violence. It may well be that the main reason why, over the centuries, we have gradually learned to "let the law take its course" rather than to "take the law into our own hands" is that the operation of the law has hitherto allayed that instinctive fear by satisfying the retributive element in the popular conception of justice. If that satisfaction ceases, there is danger that the instinct of fear will reassert

itself. It is right to recognise, as the author does, the importance of studying the psychology of criminals for their own good: equally valuable would have been his views on the need to study the psychology of the many well-behaved persons who look to the law as a protector. Frustration of their faith in the law as an effective guardian needs to be weighed against any harm that may flow from severity to violent criminals. It is our loss that on this occasion Sir Carleton Allen has not subjected that aspect of justice to the dispassionate and analytical treatment he could so well bring to bear.

In three chapters which are devoted to cruelty, as a legal offence in itself, we find studies of humanity in action which can be read profitably by students, practitioners and laymen alike. It is disconcerting to be reminded that legislation against cruelty to animals began only towards the end of the eighteenth century, but even then was more than a century sooner than the first legislation against cruelty to children; and that in some circumstances, even today, a higher monetary penalty can be imposed for the former than for the latter. The study of matrimonial cruelty is wide and thorough, and particularly helpful in covering the subject as a whole irrespective of whether it arises incidentally to any particular legal procedure. The chapter is a model of clear and interesting writing, except for the passage beginning on p. 205 on "motive and intention." The learned author holds up a clear red lamp—"If we attempt to separate them with excessive ingenuity into compartments, we are certain to end in confusion and amphibology." Thereupon he marches boldly past the red lamp, and the three pages which follow cast no discredit on his powers of prophecy.

Every member of the Bar is repeatedly asked "How can you bring yourself to defend a man who you think may be guilty?", and we all have our ways of replying. On this topic, Sir Carleton Allen's chapter on "the Conscience of

Counsel" will remain a permanent classic. Not only does he analyse and expound the nature of the personal problem: he illustrates it with an account of an Australian case, little known in this country, which exemplified in an acute degree the complexity of counsel's duty to the court and duty to his client. The facts of the case are extraordinary, and of unusual interest. This is the first fully documented account to appear in this country; it is presented with a narrative skill which could not be surpassed; and, though the author winces at the adjective "dramatic," his recounting of the Dean case deserves that compliment in its best sense.

A pleasant chapter on the Literature of the Law brings the book to a close. Far too much tenderness is shown in it to the bad drafting techniques that have developed in modern statutes. It is sad to find the author allowing the bad workman to blame his tools—"The blame for obscurity is generally placed on the draftsmen," he writes at p. 286, "... but his chief enemy is the English language or perhaps human language." The author's own mastery of English gives the lie to such a flimsy excuse for complacency. On a neglected aspect of legal literature, Sir Carleton gives some fine examples of literary quality in judgments of the courts. Finding the gems involves much research, but worthy additions to the author's specimens would be Lord Denman's famous judgment in *Stockdale v. Hansard* (1837), 9 A. & E., 107, and, for its delicate use of irony, Mr. Justice Eve's judgment in *Cummins v. Bond* (1927), 1 Ch., 172.

The book, which has a table of cases and an index, is admirably produced, the only small blemish being the insertion of the Greek phrases in type of less x-height than the English text. One can only hope that *Aspects of Justice* will receive the wide reading, both inside and outside the legal profession, that its grace and scholarship so well deserve.

REGINALD W. BELL

Principles of Administrative Law

By J. A. G. GRIFFITH and H. STREET. Second Edition. Pitman. Pp. 324. 4s.

F. W. MAITLAND once suggested that the entire history of English constitutional law might be regarded as merely an appendix to the law of real property. He was prepared to concede the importance of procedural rules—adding, however, that any codifier of English law might be expected to classify *habeas corpus* under criminal procedure rather than constitutional law. Perhaps Maitland's tongue was in his cheek, but constitutional law and even more noticeably administrative law have not, even now, made their way in English legal education as distinct and necessary entities. In the case of administrative law, the taint of Dicey's earlier strictures on administrative privilege contrived to give the phrase an alien odour. Yet "administrative law" need never have been associated in the minds of Englishmen with the later history of the divided jurisdiction depicted in De Tocqueville's *Ancien Régime*. As used, for example, by John Austin the term had been entirely innocent of any such implications. He had thought of it simply as the general law relating to the exercise of the sovereign's powers either by the sovereign or by political subordinates. This is a much wider definition than any which has been favoured in the present century, and it is practically co-extensive with constitutional law. All the same it is a defensible use.

In their *Principles of Administrative Law* (first published in 1952), Mr. J. A. G. Griffith and Professor Street adopted a definition ("the rules relating to the structure and powers of the administration") which is only slightly narrower than this—if "administration" is to be taken as "government" rather than "civil service." Some of the topics touched on—for example, legislative procedure and Parliamentary committees—might appear to fall even outside the ambit of executive operations altogether, but their inclusion points the moral that both Ministers and Members of Parliament have parts to play in the administrative machine as well as in the debating of general principles of law. The book falls into four main sections: (1) The legislative functions of government agencies; (2) The administrative and judicial

functions of these agencies; (3) Suits against the administration and the definition of Crown status; and (4) Public Corporations. In the first two sections there are separate chapters on the nature and extent of the powers in question and on their control. Since the extent of a legislative or administrative power may depend upon judicial decision, the definition of its area and the discussion of its control often turn out to be the same topic. It is a tribute to the authors' skill that this leads to no more than a minimum of unavoidable cross reference and repetition.

In the second edition cases decided since 1952 have been written into the body of the text, a bibliography has been added, and the appearance of the last section of the book improved by giving the public corporations names instead of initials. The discussion of the forms of delegated legislation and its control remains the best and most detailed thing of its kind. Chapter Two is an admirable cure for feeling sure about what a statutory instrument is, and the discussion of the mandatory or directory status of laying provisions raises some points of general interest. It may be, for example, that Mr. Herbert Morrison's embarrassment over the unlaidd Fire Services regulations of 1941 was an unnecessary one and his Parliamentary indemnity justifiably only *ex abundanti cautela*.

On the judicial side the material which the authors present suggests a fascinating problem—Is it possible to discern any order in the mass of separate interpretations of statutory phrases conferring administrative powers? It is just over twenty years since Sir Ivor Jennings, writing in the *Harvard Law Review*, suggested that an inherent bias in the common law must impede the administrative machine. In post-war years judicial review (on both sides of the Atlantic) has acquired rosier credentials. By screwing up the eyes even Laski's old *bête noire*, *Roberts v. Hopwood*, can be made to look like sturdy judicial resistance to a subjective discretion. If statutory interpretation is seen as an encounter between courts and administrators, it now occasionally seems uncertain

who are to play the heroes' roles and who the villains'.

Do we deplore the striking down of a municipal decision to provide concessionary travel for old persons (*Prescott v. Birmingham Corporation* (1955) Ch. 210)? Do we applaud a refusal to extend to statutory instruments the analogy about legislative intention embedded in the review of bye-laws for unreasonableness (*Taylor v. Brighton Borough Council* (1947) K.B. 736)? Should we rejoice that a majority of the House of Lords has construed a statute so as to preclude the review of a compulsory purchase order even though made in bad faith (*Smith v. East Elloe R.D.C.* (1956) A.C. 736)? If so, what are the relevant differences between these types of activity? Moreover, where have judicial attitudes changed

and where have the flanks been turned by the loyal application of more explicit statements of parliamentary intention?

It is this sort of question which every student of politics and public administration will be urged to pose by what Mr. Griffith and Professor Street have provided. It is an admirable book which has set a high standard for the future. Its authors have demonstrated here and elsewhere that it is possible for the disciplines of law and government to find a common meeting ground, and if their efforts should bestow on the notion of English public law the pristine status promised it in the *Outlines of Austin's* lecture course of 1832, no doubt they will be well pleased.

G. MARSHALL

The Supreme Court and Judicial Review in India

By SRI RAM SHARMA. Institute of Public Administration, Sholapur. Pp. 50. 6s.

FROM an English common law point of view India is in the worst of all constitutional worlds, and everything in it is (to some) an unnecessary evil. It has all the possibilities of legalism inherent in the Australian federal division of powers with those of the American Bill of Rights thrown in. Nevertheless, the controlling functions of the Supreme Court differ in several respects from those of either the American Supreme Court or the High Court of Australia. Both the distribution of powers and the rights guaranteed by the constitution are specified at length and qualified in detail. In addition, amendment of the constitution is easier and has, in fact, taken place in direct response to court decisions. The author of this book clearly believes (as Sir Ivor Jennings did not) that the constituent assembly's attempt at elaboration in both directions has been worth while. In the United States the Court has handed down, he says, "frankly partisan" political decisions, and "seems to be left to use its bag of tricks any way it chooses." No such discretion is possible, it is argued, in India where the constitution specifically lays down the provisos to the list of enumerated rights. The argument, if measured, is well taken. The judges are not political appointees. They can plausibly be regarded as engaged to a greater extent in statutory interpretation and not interstitial legislation, and they have

inherited some of the canons of construction applied by English courts of law. But elaboration in Bills of Rights, though it closes certain lines of argument to counsel does nothing to discourage litigation. Every proviso raises disputable marginal cases and the fundamental rights qualified and provisoed as they are to remain at least as prolific a breeding ground of legal disputes as their American counterparts.

The author reviews in brief detail the principles applied by the Supreme Court in accommodating the fundamental liberties to be necessities of collective order and economic welfare. The book loses, however, by a complete absence of citation. Direct quotations are made from a number of cases, but they are not identified, or distinguished from other anonymous citations which are clearly not judicial in origin at all. In any reprint the "canons" of interpretation on page viii ought to be scrutinised and some syntactical obscurities remedied. If it were true, for example, that the Court would "admit an application for a writ (of habeas corpus) from an aggrieved party only except when a person was in detention" (p. 18) the remedy could hardly be one for which many could have occasion to apply.

An appendix contains extracts from the Constitution and a list of Acts and legislative orders held void.

G. MARSHALL

The Post Office in the Eighteenth Century. A Study in Administrative History

By KENNETH ELLIS. (University of Durham Publications.) Oxford University Press. Pp. xvi+176. 25s.

It is nearly half a century ago that H.M. Stationery Office "published by order of the Postmaster-General" a Departmental history entitled: *The Post Office. An Historical Summary*. This pre-first war work was an illustrated book of 139 pages, "price Ninepence, or, $\frac{1}{4}$ bound, One Shilling." It is a sign of the times that the work now under review is one-third longer and twenty-five times its price. Such is the progress of historical writing.

It is often overlooked what an important part the English (and later the British) Post Office played in pioneering the ways of modern communication. The Office commenced as a mere body of royal messengers, and evolved firstly into a government service and then into a public one. It adapted the machinery of Tudor England to the industrial revolution, and by gearing that revolution to communication—much in advance of any other country—helped in considerable measure to shape the life of the world today.

All this has been said before. In 1912, for example, Harvard produced Hemmion's *History of the British Post Offices*, and ten years ago Princeton published Howard Robinson's *The British Post Office—A History*. The subject has been well written up from the philatelic aspect for example, but less well from the economic, even less well from the social, and from the administrative in effect not at all. This present book goes a long way—in respect of its period—towards filling that gap. A student of Professor Hughes whose writings on administrative history are deservedly well known (who was himself a student of the great Tout, the pioneer in this field), Dr. Ellis, of the University of Durham, is perhaps led to his subject by the person of Anthony Todd, the son of an early eighteenth-century Durham moorland farmer. Anthony Todd entered the Post Office as a lad, probably in 1732, and by the age of 45 had risen by sheer administrative ability to be its Secretary; he continued to attend the office until the age of 80.

In those days the caste system at headquarters distinguished between the heads of departments, who enjoyed the

title of Esquire and well-appointed living apartments at the office; clerks, who enjoyed the style of Gentlemen, living quarters on the upper floors or in the garrets, and a quarterly salary; and the subordinate staff, who worked "out" and lived "out," and made do with weekly wages.

The Post Office—like the Customs—was fortunate in that just prior to the important formative period, many of the important figures in the Department were mere court and political nominees—only amateurs at administration—who were content to hold as absentees, on a sinecure or semi-sinecure basis. This enabled fully professionalised administrators to get on with the job of administration, revising the old organisation and methods, and devising the new. The status of the professional administrators rose accordingly. For example, the Secretary, a post unknown during the Tudor and Stuart periods, was first placed on the Post Office establishment as late as 1694, and then only to manage the Board's correspondence and "run on little errands for the Ministers of State." At the beginning of the eighteenth century the Secretary's status began to rise and, in strict accordance with Parkinson's law, therefore, he soon acquired himself a clerk, and then two, and then more. By the middle of the century he was recognised by the Crown as the effective head, firstly of the establishment and then of the administration. By the latter half of the century, instead of the Secretary waiting on the Postmasters-General, he usually summoned them to the Board to accept his suggestions or ratify his decisions. The eighteenth century, therefore, is the important period in the administrative history of the Post Office and, as a textbook example of administrative evolution, in the history of public administration.

In the present study, Dr. Ellis bases himself mainly upon hitherto unpublished record material, principally that in the Records Department of the G.P.O. itself, supplemented by the Foreign Office and Home Office papers in the Public Record Office, and other manuscripts in the

British Museum and other repositories. He describes the administrative structure of the early office and its later evolution and development; its administrative relationships to the Treasury and Secretary of State; the organisation of the sailing

packets for the overseas mail; the struggle to rationalise the franking system; the work of the Secret Office; the interception of posts, and similar secret activities at home and abroad.

R. C. JARVIS

Rural Local Government in Sweden, Italy and India

By HAROLD ZINK, ARNE WAHLSTRAND, FELICIANO BENVENUTI and R. BHASKARAN. London, Stevens and Sons Ltd., 1957. Pp. xiii and 142. £1 1s.

THIS comparative study of rural local government was initiated by UNESCO, as an adjunct to a general survey of agrarian reform in a number of countries. The International Political Science Association nominated the team of distinguished academics who carried it out—Mr. Wahlstrand, of Gothenberg, Professor Benvenuti, of Padua, and Professor Bhaskaran, of Madras. Each of these has contributed a series of expert articles on the rural local government of their own country, dealing with the subject topic by topic. These were co-ordinated by Professor Harold Zink, of Ohio, who also added, at the end of each chapter, a short essay comparing the systems described.

It is not clear exactly why these three countries were chosen as the subject of this comparison—though they all have had some experience of land reform (but not very recently in Sweden). They are alike in having rural councils elected by all the inhabitants of the village or commune, but in little else. The Swedish system has evolved from native mediaeval origins; the Italian is the outcome of legislation of the nineteenth century, with later amendments; the Indian system is closely modelled on that which British administrators knew at home.

The limitation to three such divergent countries, and the speed with which the work was done, might have seriously limited the value of the book, were it not that it was entrusted to such expert hands. All the authors are men with a great

knowledge of the political institutions of their own countries, and their work has been very ably co-ordinated by Professor Zink, who had the difficult task of comparing such diverse systems.

Despite the differences a number of important points do emerge from the comparisons, such as the generally low level of participation by the people at large, and the small part played by political bosses and party machines in all three countries. Of particular interest to Englishmen at present is the conclusion that both in Sweden and India the system of earmarked grants-in-aid is hampering the work of the local authorities, and that "there is considerable feeling that grants-in-aid should be given for general purposes rather than piecemeal in connection with various programmes, with all sorts of strings attached."

Apart from Professor W. A. Robson's *Great Cities of the World* and one or two publications of the International Union of Local Authorities, there is very little published material on comparative local government which is even approximately up to date. This book, though restricted to only three countries, is the first comparative study of different systems of rural government. It is a most valuable contribution, but one hopes that Professor Zink and his colleagues may go on to expand it to include a dozen or more different systems, with the same skill as they have shown in this first essay.

B. KEITH-LUCAS

Handbook for Council Clerks

By B. V. FOX. Oxford University Press, 1957. Pp. x+111. 12s. 6d. (in U.K. only).

In the last ten years (since Mr. Creech Jones's famous dispatch to African Governors of 25th February, 1947) local government has developed at a galloping speed in all West African territories. The forms and even the wording of legislation have in most cases been copied

meticulously from the English model but it has not been so easy to copy that peculiar institution, the English Town Clerk. Yet it is this, more than any statutory formula, which has made the system in England work as well as it does. Training schools have been opened at

Accra and Ibadan, and many clerks of councils have come over to England to see the system at work in its natural surroundings. But still the success of the whole experiment depends more on the training of adequate staff than on any other single factor.

Mr. Fox has worked for some years with medium-sized councils in Western Nigeria, and in doing so has collected much valuable experience of how best to run these authorities, and how their clerks should manage their affairs. This he has used as the foundation of his book, which is essentially a practical guide for the inexperienced African clerk, trying to make new and strange institutions work in a land to which they are in some ways inappropriate.

A slighter work than P. J. Harris's "Local Government in Southern Nigeria," which will be reviewed later, it is less concerned with the law, and more with the practical day-to-day problems which the clerk will meet—filing systems, minutes, conflicts between the President and the Chairman of the Council, and office procedure. Within this field the advice it gives is sound, and will probably be of considerable value to the clerks to whom it is addressed. It is inclined to be dogmatic in so far as it lays down one system of filing, one method of drafting reports from committees, one set of rules for dealing with correspondence, as if there were no alternatives and no scope

for modifications. But this is not an academic treatise, it is a handbook for clerks who are struggling with strange institutions, and such a method is probably the most useful in the circumstances.

There is, however, one aspect which does call for criticism. Mr. Fox's experience is apparently restricted to Southern Nigeria, and he writes as if the legislation of all West African territories were identical with the Local Government Ordinances with which he is familiar. But the law of Northern Nigeria is quite different, and that of Sierra Leone differs in many respects. Such statements as that the "Instruments establishing the council will list a very large number of permissive functions . . ." is not applicable to councils established under the Sierra Leone District Councils Ordinance, 1950; nor are the rules about the constitution of committees the same in that country as in the Western Region. In such matters the clerk of a council in Northern Nigeria or Sierra Leone may find the book confusing, or even misleading.

Apart from these points, however, this is a useful work, which ought to help many clerks of councils in their duties, and which will make a definite contribution towards the working of local democracy in places where such simple and comprehensible advice is much needed.

B. KEITH-LUCAS

The Higher Public Service of the Commonwealth of Australia

By HOWARD A. SCARROW. Duke University Press and C.U.P. Pp. 167. \$3.50.

THE founding fathers of the Australian Constitution declared that the Federal Government would cost each citizen no more than 5s. a year—"the price of a dog licence." Today the Commonwealth Public Service numbers around 150,000 and administers a range of controls, services and benefits affecting the life of every person in the country.

Yet curiously little is known about it and the way it works. Only one book (plus chapters in two or three others) has been written about it and that dealt solely with recruitment; only two Departments are required to present annual reports; and there has been no major public enquiry into it since 1919 (if one

excludes the Bailey Committee Report on promotion methods in 1945).

Mr. Scarrow, an American research scholar, sets out to shed light on this darkness, and he does an extremely thorough and comprehensive job. His topic is the higher Public Service—Assistant Secretaries and above—but as recruitment to these positions can be from the very lowest ranks, he undertakes, in effect, a description of the whole Service.

It is this description, scholarly and concise, which gives the book its value. He ranges from the constitutional and historical background of the Service to such things as recruitment policy, promotion, training, salary, classification, and

so on. All this in 100 easy pages, remarkably free from the errors usually attendant on compression. There are errors, of course, minor ones. For example, the book opens by describing Canberra as being 200 miles south of Sydney, thus consigning it to a watery grave in the first sentence.

Having established the background, Mr. Sorrow then proceeds in the final 60 pages to discuss the composition and role of the higher Public Service. This section of the book is a little disappointing, mainly because of the things left unsaid. One wishes that the author had cast aside his scholarly restraint and discussed in greater detail the interesting and important questions for which his introductory survey so admirably clears the ground. For example, the question of recruitment is clearly of great importance and Mr. Sorrow rightly gives it prominence. Yet his conclusion is mild indeed—"it seems likely that the Service will be forced to look more and more to the universities to meet its recruitment needs."

This is all very well. But how will graduates enter? As base grade clerks or in a new Administrative Class on the U.K. pattern? If the former, are any additional steps needed to ensure that they

pass quickly through the stratum of routine positions? If the latter, could it be achieved in the Australian setting? What is the effect of the promotions appeal system? What is the future of rating reports?

Again, when discussing the role of the higher Public Service *vis-a-vis* Ministers and Parliament, he speaks of the "great power" exercised by Permanent Heads and of circumstances which have "enhanced both the responsibility and the influence of the permanent official." These are generalisations which add little to existing knowledge. In fact it is probably fair comment on this section of the book that the most cogent passages are quotations from other authors.

Perhaps one looks for too much. The book will certainly become the standard text on its subject and this seems to be the author's intention. He might not have succeeded if he had indulged in the luxury of pressing personal views on controversial topics. But let us hope that he will in due course produce a sequel. Having read the description we look forward to the commentary. In the meantime the present book is a very welcome addition to the literature.

M. G. COWIE

Social Aspects of Prescribing

By J. P. MARTIN. Wm. Heinemann Ltd. Pp. xii+180. 21s.

THIS book appears in the series of Heinemann Books on Sociology. There is a foreword by Professor Titmuss, who gives the reasons for the necessity of such a book. Mr. Martin, in his acknowledgments, makes it clear that Professor Titmuss himself had intended to carry out this study.

The study was submitted as evidence to an independent body which considered the increase in cost in prescribing in the National Health Service. This is a subject of great concern to the country, and it will be evident from Mr. Martin's remarks that administration alone is not the only matter requiring study. Many interests are involved: the patient requiring treatment, docile enough in most cases; the doctor prescribing treatment; the local and central government organisations administering the service, and an anxious Minister responsible to the government for the cost which

has consistently increased since 1948. Hovering in the background are the great pharmaceutical firms who stand to gain or lose according to prescribing fashion and administrative control.

Mr. Martin sets out the historical background and the method of administrative control of prescribing, with admirable fairness. He emphasises an important point which is not fully realised even by some practitioners who have been in practice in the National Health Service for ten years. It is that the final decision in almost every respect regarding irregular or excessive prescribing is made by the doctors' peers. The reader will note that administrative control is skilfully handled. The errant doctor is judged by other doctors, not remote or academic persons, but practitioners facing the same problems and writing the same type of prescription.

Mr. Martin pays tribute to the official

publication *Prescribers' Notes*. This bears little resemblance to the usual government publication. The notes are written in vivid style and put questions before the doctors. The description of the administrative control brings home to the reader the place of art and science which goes to make the present-day practice of medicine, but the science is so mixed with extraneous factors that it looks at first glance almost as intractable as the art from the statistician's viewpoint.

The doctor writing prescriptions does so against a background of persistent advertising of proprietary remedies. The book quotes from *Prescribers' Notes* a letter acknowledging receipt from one doctor of a 3 lb. package containing that doctor's mail from proprietary firms for less than a month. This contained three booklets (98 pages altogether), eight blotters, 16 postcards and 73 folders. In all, in less than a month, the doctor received advertisements for 122 preparations. The difficulty of assessing the effectiveness of this advertising is evident, and this is only one of the problems which faces those responsible for the administrative control of prescribing.

In the second half of the book prescriptions are analysed and the methods used carefully described. The sources of the material too are clearly indicated. The assessment of this work is essentially a question for the statisticians, but the author has used well-tried methods and has been careful, in dealing with the considerable number of variables, not to overstate his case. The figures used are those up to 1952. He comes down on the side of the encouragement of practice in groups and of partnerships in general. The stimulus of working in groups and of mutual consultation are likely to prove most valuable to the general practitioner, and he contrasts the medical profession with other professions where it is uncommon to find a single-handed person. In almost every other field the presence of colleagues is taken for granted.

No attempt is made to answer all the questions and the book goes no further than the material justifies. In the final chapter many unanswered questions are posed to the reader as a challenge and a stimulant. There are three useful appendices, including one on the statistical methods used.

A. B. STEWART

BOOK NOTES

The Art of Overseasmanship

Edited by H. CLEVELAND and G. L. MARGONE. Syracuse University Press. Pp. 150. \$3.

SOME 100,000 American civilians at present serve abroad. This vast and rapid development has brought its problems. How do the citizens of a country which until recent years has largely been a touchline critic in international affairs behave when it suddenly takes on tremendous responsibility all over the world? Does the way to behave in other countries come naturally to those who threw off colonialism so long ago? Are there too many "quiet Americans"? How can we be loved and useful and accepted for what we are—a warm-hearted, generous and altruistic people? Thirty-five men "of wisdom and experience in overseas operations" were brought together at Syracuse to discuss not exactly these questions, but the special requirements of overseas work and training

for it. The results are interesting though hardly definitive. Here is no starry-eyed optimism: instead there is a deep realisation that effective overseas service in the sense of making a contribution to the way of life of the people of the country is not easily attained. How many British overseas administrators could restrain saying: "I could have told you so," or at least releasing a wry smile at reading: "The persistence of the traditional imposes some strict limitations on what the development worker can do. He can use his development project to encourage reforms, but he cannot (contrary to the well-meaning beliefs of some American groups) do anything which makes such a drastic break with the past and traditional attitudes are outraged."

There is a good deal of interest in these rather discursive papers and report of the discussions. Here is a field where British experience—whether successful or otherwise—is well worth study and where we can learn from a fresh approach.

British Traditions in the Administration of Israel

By EDWIN SAMUEL. Sharon Press (London), 1957. Pp. 52. 5s.

IN this succinct and interesting survey, Mr. Samuel explains the government and administration of Israel, dealing in particular with the traditions and influences left behind by the British.

The Public Sector Accounts of Israel, 1948-49—1954-55. 2 Vols.

By R. M. BARKAY. Falk Project for Economic Research in Israel and Central Bureau of Statistics. Pp. 155+207. 1 L.

THIS is an 82-page essay followed by a mass of appendices, tables and statistical accounts. In the essay, Mr. Barkay discusses the changing role and the functions of the public sector, the basis of the accounts, the consolidation of the public sector agencies, and then deals separately with the Central Government, Local Authorities and the National Institutions. One of the appendices contains a suggested "model account" which rationalises and consolidates the existing methods.

The Books of a New Nation. United States Government Publications, 1774-1814

By J. H. POWELL. Pennsylvania University Press and Oxford University Press, 1958. Pp. 170. 36s.

MR. POWELL traces the developments in the printing of U.S. Government publications from the Continental Congress before Independence until the burning of the American capital in 1814 by the British.

Etudes et Documents

Conseil d'Etat. Sirey. Paris, 1957. Pp. 180.

THIS is No. 11 in the most valuable annual survey prepared under the leadership of M. René Cassin and his editorial colleagues. In addition to the usual introduction by M. Cassin and the reports on activities of the various sections of the Council, there are a number of interesting articles.

Social Services in Britain

Central Office of Information Reference Pamphlet, 3. H.M.S.O. Pp. 84. 5s.

THIS pamphlet, in a revised third edition, is one of a series produced by the Central Office of Information for the Overseas Information Services, and describes briefly the main features of all the social services in this country. The new edition contains more information about the education curriculum, and the sections on legal aid, care of children and housing have been brought up to date. To meet requests from inquirers in the United Kingdom, certain pamphlets in the series are being made available on sale from Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

National Corporation for the Care of Old People

Tenth Annual Report. Pp. 46. No price shown.

THE report explains what its Governors believe to be the Corporation's proper functions and describes its work, with emphasis on the need for special study of what is currently being done for old people and on the necessity for careful casework. The report ends by drawing attention to those old people with a little money of their own who do not make use of the available public services to provide themselves with the care, attention and security which they need.

Cabinet Government and War, 1890-1940

By JOHN EHRLMAN. Cambridge University Press. Pp. 138. 16s.

THESE are the Lees Knowle Lectures for 1957. They are a very readable general survey of the constitutional changes that took place in the organisation of defence during this period and of the administrative and political problems these changes were designed to meet.

Nationalisation and the Managerial Role

By J. V. S. RAMADASTRI. Popular Book Depot, Bombay. Pp. 119. Rs. 6.00.

THIS short book, based on a thesis, largely lives up to its sub-title—A Theoretical Study. In so far as it is concerned with

detailed cases, it mainly draws on recent British experience. The author is more inclined to the merits of free competitive enterprise than of nationalised industry, but the book is a thoughtful, if oversimplified, analysis of the different role of management in both spheres.

Electronics in the Office

Office Management Association. Pp. 132. 21s.

THE papers prepared for the Association Conference in 1957 are brought together in this volume, which also includes a section summarising the electronic data processing equipment and publications available.

A clear description of the principles on which computers operate is followed by valuable details of the research undertaken by Littlewoods, Shell-Mex & B.P., and Tunnel Portland Cement before deciding whether to use, or not to use, this type of equipment. Other contributions based on the experience of Rolls-Royce, Fisons and Lyons in using computers are factual and rightly avoid the temptation of describing how one *might* use a computer.

A criticism of this publication is that it could have been produced more cheaply by using a less glossy paper and by restricting two-colour printing to the title pages. More sales at a lower price would have justified this sacrifice and so spread, more widely, knowledge of electronic data processing in this country.

Allied Military Administration of Italy, 1943-1945

By C. R. S. HARRIS. H.M.S.O. Pp. xv+479. 42s. Maps.

THIS is the second to appear in the series within the History of the Second World War of books on civil affairs and military government. The maintenance of law, in the wake of conflicting armies, and of public utilities often after extensive sabotage is obviously not easy, and, in Italy, was complicated by the several nationalities and traditions of the occupying forces and by the Italian political situation. Mr. Harris recounts the military arrangements made from the invasion of Sicily until the final liberation of the whole of Italy, by which civil life was continued during and after the battles. Such an administration, entailing not only the

ordinary services of government, but the repair of essential war-damaged utilities and the "defascistisation" of authority, had inevitably a military basis, but much of the story reads like a political history. Mr. Harris, who, as head of one of the six divisions of AMGOT Sicily and afterwards of one of the Sub-Commissions of the Allied Control Commission, has had first-hand experience of his subject, has written a noteworthy addition to the official histories.

The Federal Lands; Their Use and Management

By MARION CLAWSON and BURNELL HILD. John Hopkins University Press and Oxford University Press. Pp. xxi+501. 68s. Illustrated.

THE federal lands, which account for about one-fifth of the total land area of the United States, include the National parks and forests, wild life reserves, grazing land, submerged areas of the outer continental shelf and other similar areas. The authors show from an economic viewpoint how these lands are used and managed. Since the war their use has become "big business," and in the last five years the revenue from the various services connected with the lands has for the first time exceeded the expenditure.

This analysis of the use and management of state-owned land is particularly relevant for those States with large areas of land under their direct control, but even the average estate manager will find the book of interest and value.

The Tasks of Government

By PROFESSOR M. BELOFF. Oxford University Press, 1958. Pp. 24. 2s. 6d.

THIS is the inaugural lecture of the new Professor of Government and Public Administration at Oxford. During the course of discussing a number of interesting topics, Professor Beloff makes the point that government and public administration are one not two subjects. The idea that in some sense administration is politically a neutral activity, functioning with equal effectiveness under not only the leadership of any particular party within a governmental system, but under quite different governmental systems, is, he says an obvious fallacy.

Etude des bibliographies courantes des publications officielles nationales. A Study of current bibliographies of national official publications

Unesco. Pp. 260. No price shown.

THE first part of this very interesting book contains chapters on official publication and its bibliographical handling, the different types of official publications, the official gazettes of states and related publications, methods of improving the publication of administrative documents, facilitating identification of official publications, and improving bibliographical control of them. The second part is composed of an inventory of publications issued by the governments of the countries surveyed. Sections are included on the United Kingdom, Australia, most of the other Commonwealth territories, the U.S.A., Russia, France and Germany. Part One is written in both French and English; some of the entries in Part Two are exclusively in French, others in English.

Bibliographie deutscher Übersetzungen aus den Sprachen der Völker der Sowjetunion

Compiled by DR. HELMUT KIND. Verlag Kultur und Fortschritt. Pp. 116. D.M. 2,50.

THIS bibliography of translations of books and articles into German from the various languages of the Soviet countries has 31 sections, all mainly of a scientific nature. The 897 entries include some directly connected with public administration. There is also an index of authors.

Bulletin. Patra Institute of Public Administration

THIS is the first number we have seen of this journal. It is published by Patra University every four months, the annual subscription being Rs. 3 and the price of each issue being Rs. 1. The December, 1957, issue contains two articles dealing with Integrity in Public Administration and Corruption in the Public Services, which show a courageous effort to deal with certain problems at present facing public bodies in India.

French Electoral Systems and Elections, 1789-1957

By PETER CAMPBELL. Faber (London), 1958. Pp. 144. 21s.

MR. CAMPBELL has packed a very great deal of useful and interesting information in a very small space. He also adds an authoritative analysis and discussion of the place of electoral systems in French politics.

The Proof of Guilt

By GLENVILLE WILLIAMS. Stevens, 1958. Pp. ix+326. 20s.

THE second edition of this excellent study of the English criminal trial has been revised to take account of recent developments. Some additional material on the systems of a few other countries has also been included for comparative purposes.

RECENT GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS

The following official publications issued by H.M.S.O. are of particular interest to those engaged in, or studying, public administration. The documents are available in the Library of the Institute.

ADMIRALTY

Explanatory statement on the Navy Estimates 1958-59. Cmnd. 371. pp. 28. 1958. 1s. 9d.

AIR ESTIMATES, 1957-58

Air services supplementary estimate for the year ended 31st March, 1958. H.C. 83. pp. 13. 1958. 9d.

1958-59. H.C. 84. pp. 224. 1958. 11s.

ARMY ESTIMATES, 1958-59

H.C. 77. pp. 201. 1958. 11s.

ATOMIC ENERGY OFFICE

Committee on the Organisation for Control of health and safety in the U.K. Atomic Energy Authority Report. Cmnd. 342. pp. 28. 1958. 1s. 3d.

BOARD OF TRADE

The Commonwealth and the sterling area statistical abstract No. 77, 1956. pp. 340. 1957. £1 2s. 6d.

CENTRAL OFFICE OF INFORMATION

Britain. An official handbook. pp. ix, 530. Illus., map, tabs., bibliog. 1958. 21s.

Now to be published at the end of each year instead of in the spring. A very full source of reference on the U.K., although it does not claim to be comprehensive. Further C.O.I. publications give more detailed information on certain questions.

CIVIL APPROPRIATION ACCOUNTS

Civil appropriation accounts (classes I-V) 1956-57. H.C. 39. pp. xx, 340. 1957. £1 0s. 0d.

CIVIL ESTIMATES, 1957-58

Supplementary estimate. H.C. 48. pp. 21. 1958. 1s. 3d.

CIVIL ESTIMATES AND ESTIMATES FOR REVENUE DEPARTMENTS, 1957-58

Supplementary estimates for the year ended 31st March, 1958. H.C. 76. pp. 177. 1958. 11s. 6d.

1958-59. *Vote on account.* H.C. 91. pp. 8. 1958. 9d.

CIVIL SERVICE PAY RESEARCH UNIT

First annual report 1957. pp. 18. 1958. 1s. 3d.

Includes account of origin and purpose of unit and of its accomplishments so far. Unit was set up after appearance of Priestley commission report in 1955.

COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES, 1956-57

Fifth report. Complaint (8th April) of certain actions of the London Electricity Board. H.C. 305. pp. xxxiii, 45. 1957. 4s. 6d.

COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS OFFICE

Australia. Agreement between the Government of the U.K. and the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia on social security, Canberra, 29th January, 1958. Cmnd. 378. pp. 15. 1958. 1s.

C.R.O. list 1958. 7th edition. pp. 278. 1958. 21s.

CUSTOMS AND EXCISE

Forty-eighth report of the Commissioners of H.M. Customs and Excise for the year ended 31st March, 1957. Cmnd. 344. pp. 197. Fronts 1958. 9s. 6d.

DEFENCE, MINISTRY OF

Supplementary estimate 1957-58. H.C. 75. pp. 4. 1958. 4d.

DEPARTMENT OF SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH

Managers for tomorrow. (Problems of Progress in Industry No. 2) by Rosemary Stewart. pp. 40. 1957. 2s. 6d.

DEFENCE, MINISTRY OF

Estimate 1958-59. H.C. 81. pp. 18. 1958. 1s. 3d.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

EDUCATION, MINISTRY OF

Training colleges in England and Wales recognised by the Minister. pp. 34. 1957. 1s. 6d.

ESTIMATES FOR REVENUE DEPARTMENTS, 1957-58

Revised supplementary estimate. H.C. 89. pp. 7. 1958. 9d.

FOREIGN OFFICE

Miscellaneous No. 27 (1957)—Agreement between the Government of the U.K. of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Governments of the States Members of the European Coal and Steel Community concerning commercial relations. Cmnd. 326. pp. 19. 1957. 1s. 3d.

GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE

The Registrar-General's annual estimates of the population of England and Wales and of local authority areas 1957. pp. 15. 1958. 1s.

HEALTH, MINISTRY OF

National Health Service. Hospital Costing returns for the year ended 31st March, 1957. Pt. I—Regional Hospital Boards and H.M.C.s in England and Wales. Pt. II—Boards of governors of teaching hospitals in England and Wales. Pt. III—Summary of hospital costs for the years 1951-52, 1953-54, 1955-56, 1956-57. pp. 135. 1957. £1 2s. 6d.

Report for the year ended 31st December, 1956, Part I. 1. The National Health Service (including a chapter on international health). 2. Welfare, food and drugs, Civil Defence. Cmnd. 293. pp. xvi. 241. 1957. 11s.

Report for the year ended 31st December, 1956, Part II. On the state of the public health. Annual report of Chief Medical Officer for the year 1956. Cmnd. 325. pp. vi, 247. Tabs. (1 folding). 1957. 9s.

Report on the grading structure of administrative and clerical staff in the hospital service. By Sir Noel Hall. pp. 48. 1957. 2s. 6d.

Survey of services available to the chronic sick and elderly 1954-1955 (reports on Public Health and Medical Subjects No. 98). A summary report prepared by C. A. Boucher, O.B.E., M.A., D.M. pp. iv, 60. Bibliog. 1957. 3s.

HOME OFFICE

Criminal statistics England and Wales 1956. Cmnd. 286. pp. lvi, 92. Tabs. 1957. 7s.

Report of the Commissioners of Prisons for the year 1956. Cmnd. 322. pp. vi, 257. Illus., tabs. (some folding). 1957. 8s. 6d.

For the first time, both narrative and statistical information for the same year are published in this report. The statistics cover 1955 and 1956, and the narrative sometimes carries forward into 1957. Some background information is added to descriptions of the year's developments.

Tribunals of Inquiry (Evidence) Act, 1921. Report of the Tribunal appointed to inquire into allegations of improper disclosure of information relating to the raising of the Bank rate. Cmnd. 350. pp. 38. 1958. 2s.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Local government bill . . . to make further provision . . . with respect to grants to local or police authorities . . . to the rating of industrial and freight-transport hereditaments and of transport, electricity and gas authorities, . . . etc. Bill 15. pp. 79. 1957. 3s. 6d.

HOUSING AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT, MINISTRY OF

Circular No. 9/58. Report of the Committee on Administrative Tribunals and Enquiries. pp. 3. 1958. 4d.

Housing return for England and Wales 31st December, 1957. Appendix. Cmnd. 354. pp. 77. 1958. 3s.

INDEPENDENT TELEVISION AUTHORITY

Annual reports and accounts 1956-57. H.C. 1. pp. iv, 35. Illus. 1957. 2s. 6d.

INLAND REVENUE

Hundredth report of the Commissioners of H.M. Inland Revenue for the year ended 31st March, 1957. Cmnd. 341. pp. v, 215. 1958. 9s. 6d.

IRON AND STEEL HOLDING AND REALISATION AGENCY

Report and statement of accounts for the period 1st October, 1956, to 30th September, 1957. H.C. 80. pp. 67. 1958. 4s. 6d.

RECENT GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS

LABOUR AND NATIONAL SERVICE, MINISTRY OF

Chief Inspector of Factories—Annual report for the year 1956. Cmnd. 329. pp. 195. Tabs. 1958. 9s. 6d.

Training for skill. Recruitment and training of young worker in industry. pp. vi, 36. 1958. 2s. 6d.

Enquiry occasioned by forthcoming increase in number of young people leaving school. Deals largely with problems of craft apprentices and other youth workers.

NATIONAL SAVINGS COMMITTEE

Annual report 1956-1957. pp. iv, 27. Tabs. 1957. 2s.

NAVY SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE

Estimate of the further sum required to be voted for the Navy for the year ending 31st March, 1958. £35m. H.C. 78. pp. 7. 1958. 1s.

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1958-59

H.C. 79. pp. 298. 1958. 16s.

NEW TOWNS ACTS, 1946 AND 1955

Accounts 1956-57. H.C. 93. pp. v, 7. 1958. 1s.

NORTH OF SCOTLAND HYDRO-ELECTRIC BOARD

Annual report and accounts 1957. H.C. 92. pp. viii, 65. Illus. 1958. 5s.

POST OFFICE

Commercial accounts and report 1956-57. H.C. 14. pp. 43. 1957. 2s. 3d.

POWER, MINISTRY OF

Report of H.M. Chief Inspector of Mines under the Coal Mines Act, 1911, for the years 1954-56. pp. 79. Tabs. 1957. 3s. 6d.

REVENUE DEPARTMENTS

Appropriation accounts 1956-57. H.C. 15. pp. xi, 33. 1957. 2s. 6d.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES, 1956-57

Minutes of the proceedings. H.C. 308. pp. 13. H.C. 308. 1957. 9d.

Eighth report—War histories. H.C. 306. pp. viii, 25. 1957. 2s. 6d.

Fifth special report—Observations of the Admiralty upon the 7th report of the Select Committee on Estimates in session 1956-57, etc. H.C. 307. pp. 25. 1957. 1s. 3d.

1957-58. *First report—Police (England and Wales).* H.C. 30. pp. xxiv, 230. 1957. 12s.

Second special report—Observations of the Minister of Defence, the Admiralty, and the Secretary of State for War and the Secretary of State for Air on the sixth report of the Select Committee on Estimates in session 1955-56 (on food supplies of the armed forces). H.C. 31. pp. 7. 1937. 6d.

Third special report—Observations of the Minister of Education and the Secretary of State for Scotland on the 7th report of the S.C. on E. 1956-57 (on Youth Service grants), etc. H.C. 66. pp. 6. 1958. 6d.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON NATIONALISED INDUSTRIES (REPORTS AND ACCOUNTS)

Report. H.C. 304. pp. xxiv, 212. 1957. 11s.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, 1957-58

Minutes of the proceedings of the Committee, 28th January, 1958. H.C. II-IV. 1958. 4d.

STANDING COMMITTEES, 1956-57

Return for session 1956-57. H.C. 310. pp. 12. 1957. 1s. 3d.

STATIONERY OFFICE

The British Imperial Calendar and Civil Service List 1958. pp. xiv, 1003. 1958. £1 5s.

TREASURY

Finance accounts of the United Kingdom for the financial year 1956-57 ended 31st March, 1957. H.C. 204. pp. 78. 1957. 4s. 6d.

National debt. Return . . . for each of the years 1938-39 and 1944-45 to 1956-57. Cmnd. 351. pp. 34. 1958. 2s. 6d.

Public Boards—list of members of public boards of a commercial character as at 1st November, 1957. . . . Cmnd. 323. pp. 19. 1957.

WAR OFFICE

Memorandum of the Secretary of State for War relating to the Army Estimates 1958-59. Cmnd. 372. pp. 16. Folding map. 1958. 2s.

PERIODICALS

The following H.M.S.O. Periodicals are received regularly and are available in the Institute Library :

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DIGEST OF COLONIAL STATISTICS. 6s. monthly.
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DIGEST OF WELSH STATISTICS. Annual. 7s.
ECONOMIC TRENDS. 2s. 6d. monthly.
JOURNAL OF AFRICAN ADMINISTRATION. 2s. 6d. quarterly.
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